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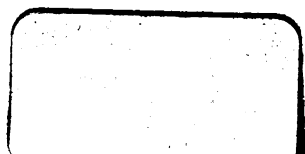
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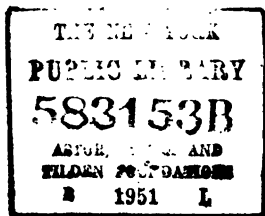
VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

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1837.

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THE ARETHUSA.

CHAPTER I.

Effects of over-indulgence in Education.—A Father's Admonitions.—A Mother's Last Gift.—Early Developement of our Hero's Character.

"Come hither, Walter, and listen to the advice of your father. Few years are left me before, in the course of nature, I shall be swept from the living; and now that the pains and aches of age and infirmity press upon me, I feel that my weakness may usher in my death before I have numbered threescore years and ten, the almost allotted period of existence. Listen, and be attentive! it is the duty of youth to regard the monitions of age, and those who scoff at gray hairs may find an early and a disgraceful end. Alas! that the seeds of depravity should have already developed themselves in a boy—a mere child—an inexperienced youth of fourteen! and I question whether it would be possible to produce a worse instance than is seen in you of a misspent youth. Many parents would rebuke you angrily; I shall endeavour by kindness to command your affection. I would have you led by your love, not driven by your fear of me: he who is dreaded is seldom esteemed, and no father would like to hear the forced grief of his son as he laid his hoary head on his pillow to die. If by that bribe I can insure your attention, take a glass of wine."

No sooner was this said, than Walter reached the bottle of port, selected the largest glass, and took good care not to allow daylight to be seen in any part of it. He did it sulkily, moodily,—he never spoke or looked at his father; but with the bold hand of an impatient tippler he filled to the brim, and, as he lifted it to his lips, seemed to regret the loss of the few

drops which in his eagerness he had spilt in conveying it to his mouth.

The father eyed the son, not in bitterness, not in wrath, but in pity : from him had never fallen one word of disgust ; —his mildness, his evenness of temper,—his love of his only son, the inheritor of his large fortunes,—had been the astonishment of his friends. The father eyed his boy, and a deep, deep sigh escaped him. Walter looked up suddenly ; he met his father's glance, and hung down his guilty head.

"Walter," began the father, "you are now past fourteen years of age, and although you have long since been able to distinguish between right and wrong, you have not the power, the strength of mind, to choose the one and to reject the other. I have heard from your master, who has just expelled you from his public establishment, that, in spite of all his care and all his attention, you disregarded his advice, you spurned his authority, you excited his pupils to rebellion ; that in your play-hours, even those amusements which of themselves are sufficiently exciting to the schoolboy were flat and insipid to you without the stimulus of gambling ; that from your greedy disposition for money, and your wish to overreach your associates, you had not only risked your own money, but had endeavoured to win theirs in a manner not strictly honourable. Walter, this was not the worst of the complaints urged against you ; there were others which, considering your youth, I can scarcely credit. You were expelled, not for ignorance, not for idleness, not for swindling, not for breaking through all restraint,—but—Heaven ! that my old eyes should ever have read the word from the pen of that excellent man—for *theft* ! As long as you live, —ay, you may well start, Walter,—as long as you live, that stain, that blot will never be erased from the book of your life. Into whatever society you go, some babbling boy will remember the deed and the punishment, and you must learn to bear with meekness the whispered reproach that Walter Murray was expelled from H—— for theft."

"He will not live," replied Walter with a slow, steady voice, "to repeat it, father."

"I fear," replied his father, "that darker deeds will follow in due time ; but I must not look too gloomily upon the future. I acknowledge that no little part of this blame most justly falls upon myself. Your mother, just before she was snatched from me in the pride and beauty of life, warned me

of your disposition. My love for you disposed me to view as boyish tricks what have since ripened into crimes; and the first false step on the inclined plane of vice has been followed with such impetus, that you have nearly slid into irretrievable ruin before you were aware of the gulf into which the smooth, deceitful descent has urged you.—Walter?"

"Well," replied the boy, starting; "did you speak, sir?"

"Did I speak!" repeated the old man, his eyes lighting up into a half-passion; then instantly relapsing into their wonted calmness, he continued,—“I spoke of your faults and your follies. You were listless when your poor old father was by kindness endeavouring to palliate them, or half to bear the reproach himself. The folly of the law has made you my heir,—the estates settled on your mother's marriage devolve upon her child, and I have no power to alienate them, or I should be half inclined to try what might be effected by placing the fortune into hands that would only relinquish it when you altered your behaviour.”

“Thank you, father,” said the boy, “for the kind disposition you show to make me wise by making me a beggar. Have you any more to say? for I have promised to meet one or two of my friends to-night.”

“Yes, Walter, I have much to say, and to-night you certainly do not meet those friends. To-night we must resolve what profession you are to follow—how your education is to be conducted; for I will have no idler in my house, whose whole existence is to be a burthen to himself and all those around him. The fortune I have earned was not acquired without much toil, much thought, much trouble: to that very toil and trouble I owe the happiness I now experience in all but the conduct of my son. The day was too short for my occupation; the flying hours never lagged upon my hands; constant employment was but a pleasing prelude to my evening's domestic comfort; and in my office and in my room I learned that true happiness is not to be found, but to be made.”

“I find just the contrary,” said the saucy boy; “for in this room I have no happiness, and out of it I sometimes do find pleasure. To be sure I have had some delight here to-night, for I fancy you cannot send me back to school again.”

“If your mother had not been as virtuous as she was fair,” said his father, “I should much doubt your being my son;

for there does not seem to run one kindred drop of blood in our veins."

"What's bred in the *bone*, father, you know,—” and the youngster sat back and laughed.

"Silence, sir!" said the old man; "your remark is a sufficient rebuke without a continuance of it; for had I acted with the firmness—the duty of a parent, the son would never have dared to make such a remark, at such a time, or under such circumstances. Had I exacted the respect due to me when you were younger, I should not have been insulted in my old age."

"I certainly do believe," replied Walter, without the slightest hesitation, "that all my faults and follies are owing to your neglect of me. But what is the use of talking any more about it?—what is done cannot be undone. What do I care for the reverend gentleman's pen or for his expulsion! I shall be a soldier—I shall go into the cavalry; for I'm not inclined to use my own legs more than is requisite, and I'm very fond of riding; besides which, I shall have plenty of money; and therefore am not the lad to be placed on a high stool to dangle my legs, or to ink a desk: so that is settled, father; and now I may go, I suppose?"

"Stay, sir," replied the old man,—“stay; and since you have taught me my duty, I shall not hesitate to enforce it. Stay, sir, I repeat; and let me find that I have been mistaken, and that you are ready to follow my advice. True it is that your mother's kindness to her only child, whose wayward disposition was never checked, but each wish gratified almost before it was expressed, has led to this unfortunate end: but there is still a hope that you may be reclaimed,—that religion, affection, duty, may all be appealed to with effect. Walter, your conduct to me is more like that of an insolent, discharged servant, than of a son to his only parent! Your conduct is more like that of a hardened offender, than of a youth of fourteen who has received in his mind the germ of religion, although the flower was destroyed in its bud! I need not say how disreputable has been your conduct. Conscience must warn you that your behaviour cannot go unpunished, and I know that you bear about you the reproach which the last remaining spark of honour will still show to your debased mind. Come, my son, let me wean you by kindness from the sad path into which you have entered. For my sake, Walter—for the honour of our name, for your own re-

putation, cease this idleness of behaviour; devote your time to study, occupy your hours in some useful pursuit: that which has passed shall then be forgotten; and when you make the promised amendment, you shall receive my pardon and my blessing."

The father paused, and fixed his eyes upon his son. The warm, affectionate tone in which he had couched the last remark had no visible effect upon this misguided youth, who seemed to consider the whole rebuke as very unseasonable after dinner, and who was most anxious it should come to a conclusion, and that he should be released from his parent's presence. In this he was mistaken: his father, as if awakened from a dream, had found, when nearly too late, the extent of his son's follies, and he resolved at once to use every effort to retrieve the boy's character and his own honour.

Walter answered sullenly, that his father was never satisfied; that he was the head of his class; that whenever the reverend gentleman had written, he had never been punished for his lessons; and that no boy his junior in age was his senior at school. "What more do you want?" he continued. "I am sent to school to learn: if I am so taught that I retain my place, upon what ground can you censure me?"

"Upon the ground of dishonesty—dishonour. Walter," replied the father, "you are quick—you are clever: but you are idle; and 'Idleness,' as you may have written—"

"'Is the root of all evil,'" continued Walter. "Who taught me to be idle?—my mother. When I was anxious to sit down and read, who told me not to mope all day over a book, but to go out and take exercise as other boys did?—my mother. Who used to complain of my pale face and sunken eye?—my mother. Well, I left off study and took to exercise; and now I am told that my idleness has occasioned my dishonour! As I said before, there is no satisfying some people."

The father during this speech had risen from his chair, and walked quickly up and down the room in evident agitation; and when his son had concluded this tirade of abuse against his mother, the old man stood before him. "Answer me, Walter," he began: "when your poor dear mother lay upon her bed of death,—when, as the last beams of the setting sun rested upon your face, she took from her bosom a locket and hung it around your neck, did she not say, 'Walter, Walter, I fear I have been too blind a mother; but as

you hope that my soul may rest in peace and quietness above, I implore you, every morning, when you have lifted your voice to Heaven, to look at this last gift, and steadily to determine that throughout the day no error shall be committed which shall blanch the cheek with shame, or force the blood which shall arise as a witness on your face, to give evidence against you.' You remember that even at the last moment of her life, when I knelt beside the bed, and moistened her cold hands with the burning tears which started from my eyes,—ay, after she had blessed *me*,—she blessed you and bade you *remember* her last words. If now you have one spark of honour left in you, draw that locket from your breast, and say that one word, '*remember*;' then shall I have hopes that this current of lost affection may be turned into its proper channel, and the fountain which has been mudded by your faults may yet fall in clear drops upon the earth. I ask you—I command you, Walter, to take that locket in which is the miniature of your mother, painted after the hand of death had approached her, and as you look at those sunken eyes, promise me to amend."

A deep blush covered the face of Walter—a blush of shame and of regret. His father saw it and cherished it as a good omen—as a proof that he had at last touched the chord which would bring harmony and contentment to all—a proof, he thought, that every sentiment of honour had not been blasted by the withering breath of idleness. He stood before him, and as he watched the blush becoming more and more faint, he said, as he fondly took his hand, "Comfort me, dear Walter, by this one act of obedience from which I argue the greatest good?"

The boy remained silent and made no sign of compliance.

"Come, Walter, it is the only request I have made—and which I now only make as conducive to your own happiness. I know you always wear it about you."

"I have not got it now about me," said the boy, feeling for it:—"I know I have not got it on."

"I thought you promised your mother, Walter, as you knelt by her side, never to part with it, and that you would always wear it? Tell me," said the father, as a sudden thought seemed almost to check his speech. "what have you done with it, and where is it? Walter, do not tell me a falsehood, lest you make me hate as well as despise you. What have you done with it?"

"Sold it," answered Walter.

"Sold it!" ejaculated his father with emotion: "speak, Walter, can that be possible?"

"Yes: one of the boys, a friend of mine, persuaded me to sell it, and I did sell it."

"Gracious God!" exclaimed the father, "do I hear rightly? or has some sudden visitation of Providence fallen on me—some affliction unparalleled overtaken me? Leave me, Walter,—leave me, that I may not curse you—that I may not by a hasty word render myself unhappy as you have made me to my last hour."

Walter availed himself of the order, and, rising from his chair, walked hastily to the door; and before his father could summon back his natural affection to recall his child, he heard the street-door close violently, and was aware that the last spark of duty had been quenched in his son.

He threw himself on his chair, and thus allowed his thoughts to wander back to happier days, endeavouring to trace what errors he had committed that a gracious Providence should have cursed him with a disobedient child. "Let me see," he began: "from the time I left school, I was assiduous in my duties; I toiled for those who employed and who paid me—I never wasted an hour on myself which belonged to them—I gained their confidence, I was rewarded by being admitted into partnership with them. The wealth of other countries soon enriched me; I became a wealthy man. I did not niggardly hoard it; there is not a public charity in the metropolis to which I do not subscribe. I never injured the weak, or denied the poor; and as far as erring nature can control itself, I have controlled myself. I passed the chair as mayor of the metropolis; I was made a baronet by my sovereign.—This is the flattering side of the picture: let's see the reverse. Have I returned sufficiently grateful thanks for all the blessings I have received?—have I not at times been swollen with a purse-proud conviction of my wealth?—have I not envied others?—have I not forgotten my God in the remembrance of myself? Yet can I place my hand to my heart and declare that my principal sins must be those of omission, not of commission. My prayers have not been heard: for daily, nightly, have I prayed that my son might grow up in wisdom and in honour; that the finger of shame

might never be pointed at him ; that he might not squander his wealth ; that he might remember the last moments of his mother. Perhaps," continued the old man as he mused,—"perhaps my greatest error in life was my marriage : I was too old—I was fifty and more, and then I could not expect to see my son fairly launched in life. To whom can I now leave him ? (for I feel this last blow has indeed done more to ruin my mind and my health than ten years of increasing age)—to an uncle who despises him—to a guardian he hates. My estates, the hard-won earnings of my youth and manhood,—my worldly treasures, amassed with such toil,—will fill the pockets of the gamester, render the rogue prosperous, and the villain affluent !—Ay, that was an error when my child was made independent of the parents ! for tattling boobies are sure to teach a boy that he is independent, and that, come what may, he cannot be injured in his prospects. What can I do now ? Alas ! what charms has this once peaceful home to me ! I dread to look upon the only human being who should regard me as his best friend, his protector, his parent. How my head throbs, how awfully cold I feel ! Surely, surely, this last act of my son has stricken me with an arrow as poisoned as that of death. It must not be—I must rouse myself to my duty ! Henceforth kindness is useless—I must be determined and resolute !"

He rose from his chair and rang the bell. It was answered by an old faithful servant, who had contributed his share in spoiling Walter, and who now stood before the master he had served for thirty years.

"Where is my son, Benjamin ?" said old Murray, as if he listened for the echo ; "where is my son ?"

"I do not know, Sir Hector," replied Benjamin ; "but I heard the door close about half an hour since.—But perhaps he is in the drawing-room. Shall I see, Sir Hector ?"

"Do. If he is there, tell him I *desire* to speak to him."

"Something in the wind," thought old Benjamin as he closed the door. "Never heard master *desire* any man to do any thing : another scrape, I'll be bound. How pale the old gentleman looked !"

"He is not there nor in the house," said the servant as he returned ; and then observing Sir Hector wiping a tear from his eyes, he approached with the freedom of a faithful, long-tried servant, and said,

"I don't think you are well this evening, Sir Hector. Shall I send for the doctor?"

"What makes you think so?" asked Sir Hector, endeavouring to force a smile upon his countenance.

"You look so pale, sir, and you do not speak as you did. Lord defend us," continued Benjamin starting, "if master has not fallen down dead in his chair!" He flew to the bell and rang a peal which convinced the footman something was wrong; for, in Sir Hector's summons for his servants, his hand never betrayed that eager haste, that sharp command, which may even be conveyed by a bell-pull.

The doctor was sent for, the house was alarmed, and perhaps Sir Hector might have died, verifying the old saying—"Too many cooks," &c. had not the old housekeeper declared it was only a faint, and soon restored animation. When, however, the doctor arrived, he found his patient in a strange, unusual state: there was no reason for the excitement under which he laboured, and which gradually increased; nor could the medical gentleman glean from Sir Hector one word of the cause of this sudden indisposition. The requisite medicines were prescribed; soothing draughts were administered; the lancet gleamed over his arm; and by midnight, Sir Hector, watched by Benjamin, the most faithful and honest of attendants, was in a quiet slumber, his features pale but placid, his mind and his body apparently at rest.

In the mean time, Walter had no sooner quitted his father's house, than he forgot the last words of his parent, or only remembered them with scorn, as if a curse was a matter of any consequence: indeed, he rather wished the idea would occur a little oftener, so that he might be dismissed from the long, prosing lecture which old heads think proper to inflict upon lads of right spirit, who only do what young men ought to do. As he walked to Drury-Lane Theatre, where he had appointed to meet one or two of his companions, he turned over in his mind his future prospects. "My father," he began, "can't last long: and poor, good old soul, it will be a happy release *for him*; he is not fit for this world. Wealth is of no use to him, except to patch up an old cottage on the estate for some lazy, lurking scoundrels, who have persuaded him they are honest, and that circumstances have reduced them. By Heavens! wait only until I'm of age, and I'll clear them out, root and branch, every mother's son of them.

I'll have no lazy vermin to fatten on the estate, and it *must* come to me. Then there's that old sanctified-looking hypocrite, Benjamin: thirty years has he been gleaning the rich fields of harvest, in both town and country. Out he goes, stock and fluke, as that young midshipman used to say. 'Faith, I'll have no old chronicler of my theft!—That's an awkward word; but it's not so bad as it sounds. I did not *steal*, I only borrowed the money without the owner's consent—and certainly with not much idea of repaying it: but who does pay?—only your stupid fellows, who talk about the pleasure of being out of debt merely because their credit's so bad that they cannot get into it. Now, if it only would please my father to have a sharp fit of the gout, I could get through a fortnight's fun without interruption. But frolics cost money, and with that I do not like to part, excepting when I have borrowed it as I did at school; and then perhaps the sooner the evidence of the fact is smothered, the better. It's not the act, but the discovery of it, which engenders shame.—Hulloa! here already! I must have walked fast. But I remember hearing my old father say, that people in love or in thought always keep their heads down and go along at a quick pace."

"Half-price yet?" said Walter as he neared the man in the box-office.

"Yes, sir," said he.

"Can't you let me in at the gallery price? for the play must be nearly over, and I have only two shillings about me."

"No, sir," replied the man, "quite impossible; for I should have to pay it myself, as the check-taker above would have the tally against me."

"It's very hard," replied Walter: "Here am I, a boy from school, only twelve years old, and I shall have to walk back again."

"Very hard indeed, sir," said the man; "but much harder upon me if I was obliged to pay for your pleasure."

"Oh!" said Walter, finding he could not succeed by his falsehood, "I have the money: how odd I should have forgotten that I put it in my pocket!"

He paid, received the leaden check, and was not so quick in his departure but that he heard the box-office man say, "Well, he is young enough surely to have lied like a tooth-drawer."

This made no impression upon Walter—he was quite accustomed to such expressions applied to himself; and fortunately enough, one would suppose, for the nursing of that talent the very developement of which the money-taker had observed, the farce just begun was “The Liar,” to which Walter lent a very attentive ear, and certainly profited by the example, although he scouted the moral. His companions, two young lads about sixteen or seventeen, had joined him, and seemed to cheer him on by hazarding an unfounded remark, that *Young Wilding* beat him hollow, and that it would require years for Walter to surpass his model.

“I think,” said Gordon, the elder of the two, “Murray might give *Jeremy Diddler* a lesson in the art of filching.”

“Yes,” said Hammerton, who was a midshipman; “every finger in his hand is a fish-hook, and it will be a sharp craft that will turn to windward of him.”

These remarks, and about a dozen others, were unnoticed by Walter, who watched the play with the greatest attention, and who smiled with satisfaction whenever the actor of “*Young Wilding*” came out successful from any of his monstrous untruths; but when at the close the liar was likely to be unmasked, he turned round to Gordon and said, “Dreadfully dull this! let’s be off.”

“Ah!” said Gordon, “I suppose you have profited all you can, and now for the practice!”

“Let’s tap our booms,” said Hammerton, “and steer away for an oyster-house.”

“No, no,” said Murray; “let’s take a turn in the saloon.” This was agreed to, and they forthwith repaired to that rendezvous of vice, which in the time of which we write, had no equal in England. All that could display a contempt of decency, was here congregated and exhibited. The young midshipman, who had been three years afloat, and who had associated with these specimens of frail mortality at Portsmouth or Plymouth, and who had seen them by hundreds as they were mustered into the ship to which he belonged, looked carelessly on the scene. Gordon was afraid to be thought less manly than his inferior in age, but superior in worldly knowledge; Hammerton re-echoed his sayings; whilst Walter, inspired as it were by the low wit and rivalry of the cockpit, treasured each remark in his mind, and wondered how people could remain on shore when such a field for improvement was open for them afloat. Fortunately, however, an uncle of Gordon came into the saloon: the young

man instantly declared that he must depart; and Walter and Hammerton being indisposed to part company with him, the three adjourned to an oyster-room, and there passed a jovial hour or two.

It is alarming how, with increased rapidity, the novice in guilt falls from the insecure pinnacle of virtue to the lowest depths of crime! Few, if any, fly from top to bottom without touching the steps; but some, and many there are, who take long strides, and hardly rest for a moment on any one of the different gradations. Walter, from one false step at school, (a falsehood, backed up by circumstances all equally false,) made his first descent. His lie was believed; he saw he might escape detection; he descended to meanness, selfishness, and finally to theft. His only chance of restoration to any character was the navy, for there the smallest prevarication, the slightest meanness is instantly discovered and punished; the active scenes of life, the daily perils, the constant employment, the ever-watchful eye over the youngster's conduct, may reclaim the most vicious. In Hammerton, for instance, all that was noble and generous could be traced; in Walter there was nothing but selfishness and deceit; whilst in Gordon might be seen the eagerness of youth to catch at any thing however trivial, which emanated from the straight-forward seaman, and even to relinquish his classical dictionary, for the more questionable vocabulary of the cockpit. The straight-forward manner of a youngster who has been in a well-disciplined ship, saving always that the language is not the most polished, would be aped by half the boys of the public schools who were his superiors in every accomplishment as well as in age.

Before leaving the theatre, Walter fixed upon the oyster-room they were to visit. It was agreed to, and he was seen moody for a moment; he then resumed his gayety. It was a drizzling rainy night; the young companions called a hackney-coach, and it was remarked by Hammerton how excessively civil Murray had grown, for he insisted upon handing his friends in. Their astonishment, however, soon gave way to a cheer of disgust, when, on the coach stopping, Walter, who was nearest the door which was opened, jumped out, exclaiming, "The last out pays for the coach!" and he rushed into the house, leaving Hammerton to pay. He was a generous lad, and merely remarked when they were seated, that Murray had taken advantage of a start of wind and made a stretch to windward of him.

CHAPTER II.

How to obtain a Parent's Blessing and a Parent's Cash. A Midshipman's first Departure from Home.

It is needless to comment upon the neglect of Sir Hector in regard to his son. From the single fact that a boy of his age should be allowed to visit the theatres unprotected, it will be easily conceived by the reader how completely Walter had assumed a right to be his own master, and how scornfully he rejected any advice. The assumed gravity of the parent was now useless; and it would have required more firmness of character, more energy of mind than Sir Hector possessed, to repossess himself of his lost authority.

The hopeful youths mentioned in the last chapter, after having enjoyed some few dozens of that living nutriment which the bravery of men has converted into food without first sentencing it to death,—and thereby in this instance confuting the definition of man, that he cooks his victuals,—and having imbibed long and deep potations of that bitter, muddy mixture, called porter, and finished by some more congenial beverage in the shape of grog, they separated for their respective homes.

Walter attempted to shirk his portion of the payment by proposing the alternative of heads or tails,—the money being under his hand and artfully kept on the exact balance so that it might be turned against his adversary whichever he happened to call. Foiled in this, for both his friends seemed to know his propensities, he walked home although it rained, and called to his remembrance all the lively anecdotes of Hammerton, who had not only read the title page of life, but had turned over some of its most interesting pages. In his idea, the sea offered the best profession for a boy of desperate character; for with all Walter's faults, he was no coward: he was a contradiction of the received notion that guilty people are always timid, as the Swedes are a living lie upon the wisdom of the world, who, ever since the first tippler

was known, have declared that all drunkards are dishonest; the inhabitants of Dalecarlia being proverbially the greatest habitual drunkards and the most honest race in Europe. Walter's idea of a hussar dress gave way in his opinion before the white patch of a midshipman's collar, and the long swaggering sword lost in comparison with the neat dirk.

On his arrival at home, Benjamin opened the door; a very unusual circumstance, for Benjamin was no night-watcher,—his toil ceased when Sir Hector retired to rest, and the baronet was a great lover of early hours and beauty sleep.

"What keeps you out of bed, Benjamin?" said Walter: "is it the praiseworthy employment of watching my return and of tattling to my father?"

The old servant looked with an eye of astonishment at the question, and answered, that he was not accustomed to such mean acts, but that he was up in consequence of the severe illness of Sir Hector, who, he said,—and this he added with that peculiar voice which real fear causes,— "will, I apprehend, never recover."

"Nonsense!" said Walter; but it was expressed as if the news was much too good to be true.

"No nonsense, sir, I assure you," replied the servant: "when you left him, he was seized with a giddiness, and fainted."

"Was he drunk?" asked the unfeeling boy.

"Not so much," replied Benjamin, "as you appear to be. I think, Master Walter, you had better go as quietly to bed as possible. Master has fallen asleep and the doctors have desired him to be kept quiet. As your room is over his, perhaps you will pull your boots off here, and I will get you your slippers?"

"I shall do no such thing,—give me a light:—" and upstairs walked the hopeful boy, purposely making a noise, in order, as he said, that his father might know when he returned without asking his spy; and there, forgetful of those duties his mother had inculcated, he threw himself upon his bed, unmindful of the thanks he owed his Creator for the life of the day past, and which he had so unprofitably—so disgracefully spent.

The morning dawned; Sir Hector was better and desired to see his son. He was slow in attendance, and then appeared like a boy who knew he deserved a rebuke, and ex-

pected it. He found his father better than he even believed, and was agreeably surprised to find that so far from a rebuke, his kind-hearted parent extended his hand, and seemed rather by his manner to ask forgiveness than to censure a fault.

"Come close to me, my boy," said Sir Hector, "for I am not strong enough for any great exertion: a night's sickness does more to weaken this old frame than a month's indisposition does to yours. I am very anxious about you, Walter. I should like, since now your character——But I will not say a word about that; I shall forgive you the instant you amend, and which for your own comfort and respectability will, I know, be shortly done. Remember, Walter, you inherit my title—my fortune—my name. I would not have that disgraced by my son, which has been respected in the father. I must place you, in more stirring scenes, and this war, I think, offers a prospect of employment. You are too young for the army; to which last night you seemed to give the preference. It requires long study and much steadiness," continued Sir Hector, a slight smile passing his lips, "to make either a clergyman or a lawyer; and your disposition does not much fit you for the former, and the latter requires too much mental labour. Now the sea, I think,—although Heaven knows I shall part with you with much sorrow!—would suit you better than any other; and if you are so inclined, I think I could get you into a comfortable ship with an old friend of mine, who will be as considerate as the service permits, and who will be kind and attentive to you. I have selected a man of mild, gentlemanly manners, to whom I will write by to-night's post: his ship is at Portsmouth, and before a week you may be afloat. It is no small trial for a father to part with his only son when he has the means of making him comfortable and respectable without a profession; but I never liked idle men,—they are always pests, and mostly vicious. Think of it, Walter, and give me your answer."

"I am ever willing," replied the artful boy, "to follow your advice: I admit I have done wrong, and I am willing to retrieve my character."

Sir Hector grasped his son's hand: "God bless you, boy; the acknowledgment of an error is the first step towards sincere repentance; and from the admission you have just made, I argue that your day of dishonour is past."

henceforth I shall see a son who will add honour to my name: and I trust that the profession into which he is about to enter will know nothing of the past, and have reason to be proud of the conduct of Sir Hector Murray's boy. Enough of this for the present. You were late last night, Walter; where did you go?"

"To the theatre, my dear father: I hardly knew where I was going when I left the house, but decided on the play to cheer me up."

"Did you meet any one you knew?" asked Sir Hector.

"Yes, father; I met Hammerton, a midshipman, and Gordon, an old schoolfellow of mine."

"Hammerton?" said Sir Hector, musing; "is he a Somersetshire man? for an elderly gentleman of that name who has seen better days resides on my estate in that county. I think I remember that when he became suddenly impoverished, one of his sons was sent to sea, on board the Tribune, Captain Barker. In that ship I intend to place you: Barker is an old friend of mine, and I shall write to him this evening. Before you leave me, Walter, in order that I may get a little repose, let me again tell you how you comfort me by your promise to amend. I shall earnestly pray to God to strengthen the laudable resolution. Good-b'ye for the present."

Sir Hector had no occasion to say good-b'ye twice. Out came Walter, saying, "A precious good business this!—got my own way once in my life without opposition, and a blessing to boot. If I thought blessings accompanied by some money were so easily obtained, I should be more liberal of my promises. By-the-by, it's not a bad time to reap a little harvest." As he said this, he reopened the door and asked his father, who had fallen back on his pillow much exhausted, if he could give him a little pecuniary assistance.

"There is my purse, Walter," said the kind old man: "you have made me so happy, that I cannot be niggardly in regard to any thing which contributes to your comfort. Take what you want."

Walter was very quiet in his lightening of the purse; he merely took two or three guineas, he hardly knew which: but twice after he had opened the purse and replaced it, he weighed it in his hand, and squinted round at his father. He again left the room; and before the father was asleep, the son, like all idlers in cities, was hunting for pleasure, with a

whole day before him, and without the smallest notion as to how he could kill the long hours between ten o'clock in the morning and six o'clock in the evening. Home was the most hateful of all places to him—he never could feel comfortable near his father, although it has been seen that no parent was ever more indulgent than Sir Hector; yet the miniature of his mother was not entirely forgotten, and he felt every now and then, that if he could repurchase it at a moderate price, he would part with the money to obtain it. Now indeed, as he was about to try the most dangerous of all professions excepting that of a powder manufacturer, some few boyish superstitions crossed his mind, and he began to sum up all he had read about parents' blessings and parents' curses. The excitement of the town—the thoughts of the uniform—the belief that he would shortly be his own master, (an error he had time afterwards sufficiently to acknowledge,) changed a little the general evil current of his thoughts, and on his return he was gratified beyond measure to hear that the letter to Captain Barker had been written and sent.

The recovery of Sir Hector was owing to the pleasure he received from the hope implanted in him that his son was not entirely lost, that the seeds of virtue were not entirely choked by vice, or that his heart was not the barren rock from which nothing good could emanate. The fond belief that Walter might retrieve himself, and the advice of all his friends to send him to sea to be tamed and taught, gave him a gleam of satisfaction through the dark mist of obscurity and gloom. The answer arrived on the third day: the Tribune would be ready in a week, but a fit-out could be obtained in a day. Walter became more anxious as his friendship increased for Hammerton, who gave such a spirited account of battles and prizes, that now it would have been impossible to restrain his curiosity from being gratified. Hammerton had been ordered to return immediately, and Walter thought this a good opportunity of forwarding his own views; he therefore took him to Grosvenor-square, introduced him to his father, and it was soon settled and arranged that they were to start together (Sir Hector not being sufficiently recovered to accompany them) in Sir Hector's travelling carriage—for he was particularly anxious that his son should be known as the offspring of a man of fortune, and not a needy adventurer in the wooden walls of old England,

The morning for their departure came, how eagerly hoped by Walter, how bitterly regretted by his father! The last advice—the last lecture was nearly as follows:

"Walter," he began, "it is a duty a parent owes his child to give him as far as he is able the wisdom of his experience; but well I know this is a commodity often offered as a gift, but strangely enough never accepted, but always purchased. It is the only thing I know which people young or old will buy; and they generally pay a very exorbitant price for the article, useless to all but themselves. From the time you embark, you will find yourself one of many, and yet so cautiously watched that you might fancy yourself the only object on board. Lay aside all pride of fortune, otherwise your equals will despise you, your inferiors will envy you. Envy, Walter, is another word for unquenchable hatred: a man who envies you, will gladly see you ruined, and will not be over-nice as to the mode. There is nothing in which poor weak human nature more exults than in trampling on the person it once envied; there is no news more gratifying than the ruin of such a man. Therefore, conduct yourself in such a manner, that whilst you do not debase yourself to the level of those below you, you do not exalt yourself so much above them as to excite their jealousy. Be generous to all to whom you have the power of being generous. Avoid all low coarse expressions: any one may be vulgar,—the difficulty is to excel in suavity of manners; in this your profession have not as yet produced a model which we prefer to ourselves. On no account be quarrelsome: you are young, and if defeated in your first battle with a boy of your own size, but who from exercise had become stronger, you might become fearful of your strength, lose confidence, and become timid. Be foremost in any danger; but remember, if you have wronged a man, it shows more courage to apologise than to fight. Every one has a certain proportion of brute courage: but that which is the result of cool determination is bravery; that which is done under the sudden impulse of revenge, or when heated by wine or madness, is not courage, but temerity. I remember once in early life seeing a Spanish bull-fight. It was impossible not to admire the cool dexterity and courage of the picadores; but on a sudden, when the animal was infuriated from the fire-works which were struck into it, a half-drunken mule-driver rushed into the arena, imitated the brute in putting his head down and

ran unarmed towards the bull. His head went exactly between the horns: he was thrown of course, and would have been trampled on but for the interposition of one of the matadores, who coolly walked up and killed the animal. In this anecdote, Walter, you can distinguish between courage and temerity.

"Never be guilty of falsehood—the slightest deviation from truth is to be censured. I speak not of *embellishing* an anecdote, in invention to convey a moral, in wit to excite gayety: I speak of the careful abstraction of a part in order to disguise the whole, or the making addition to a circumstance to give it more weight than it deserves. Falsehood which is wilful has no name sufficiently strong in the English language to express its shame; it is the refuge of the coward, the resource of the mean and the pitiful. I know as you grow up you will be exposed to temptations, to which we poor weak mortals are subject: against these the constant restraint of religion is your best defence. Remember, Walter, the difference of prayer related by an old author. A soldier before a battle made the following appeal to Heaven: 'O God, if there be a God, have mercy upon my soul, if I have a soul.' When this was related to the Bishop of Rochester, that prelate remarked, that so far from its being excusable on the score of its brevity, it was every way objectionable, and better for the soldier would it have been to say: 'O God, if in the day of peace I have forgotten thee, forsake me not in the hour of peril.' The groundwork of religion I trust is still within you; a year or two will convince you of your faults and your follies, and the reaction will, I hope, be the stronger. But, mistake me not: I would not have you fall into the opposite extreme. 'Be not righteous overmuch,' and never let your pride overstep common sense. Some people tell you that they feel they are of the number of the elect, and that those who are not exactly of their creed cannot be saved. They thus condemn seven hundred and ninety-nine millions, nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand who dare to dispute the orthodoxy of one thousand fanatics. When you have performed an action which your conscience tells you is a good one—when you have neither transgressed the laws of God nor those of your country, (and for the latter the punishment is summary,) I tell you not to believe that you cannot be saved unless on any peculiar tenet of faith; for if you do, you are as unjust to yourself as the one thou-

sand blockheads who have felt their election sure, and thus become prouder than the proud, and more ambitious than the fallen angels.

"The good things of this life have been given you with a generous hand; you are not subject to the misfortunes which press heavily on some who labour for existence. You are neither deformed in person nor deficient in intellect; you are neither stunted of stature nor short of strength. Be not, therefore, ungrateful for the kindness you have received; but rather strive by the cheerful discharge of your duty here, to merit a reward hereafter.

"The time now grows short, Walter, before we part, and perhaps for ever. The distinguished bravery of the man under whose command I have placed you will lead you into dangers and difficulties, and no man can say that you are certain to return. On the other hand, old age and perhaps some regret at what lately happened have sapped my health; but, by the blessing of God, to whom I confidently hold up my hands in earnest hope that my prayers may be granted, we shall meet again.

"Now, Walter, before we part, I have a present to make you; and let me implore you on no account to part with it. The attention you now pay to me warrants the belief that the words have not been uttered in vain. I have mentioned all on the score of advice excepting the avoidance of drunkenness. It is so ungentlemanly, so filthy, to degrade the man to the level of the beast, that I need not recommend you to avoid a moment's exhilaration, which is most amply paid for in the sickness, the lassitude of the morrow. I have at a considerable expense, but which I do not grudge, recovered your mother's locket for you; how I traced, what I paid for it, I need not say. Here it is, Walter; and as I place it round your neck, I implore Heaven to protect you, and that whenever through the levity of youth you should be inclined to swerve from the proper course, this locket may attract your attention.

"I am certain, after all that has happened, that you will feel for me as I feel for you, with all the attachment which ought to subsist between parent and child. You will write frequently—indeed, whenever an opportunity occurs,—and do not plead as an excuse the having nothing to say: every act of your life will interest me—every friend you make will be acceptable to me; and nothing will give me greater satisfaction than the assurance of your captain that you have

diligently performed your duty. To my diligence in early life you owe your future prospects; and those who come after you should have the same incitement to imitate a good example.

"And now, Walter, as I hear your friend's knock, and as the carriage is ready, I shall wish you good-b'ye. Benjamin will accompany you; I have given him the money which is requisite; your own purse is well filled; and here is a letter to Captain Barker, begging him to endorse any bill he may think you require. God bless you, my boy, and may Heaven restore you to me!"

CHAPTER III.

An Oldster and a Youngster.—Tempting sketch of life afloat,—
A Senior in command.—A Post-captain's Authority.

WALTER hurried from the library, inwardly rejoicing that his father's admonitions had terminated. The lecture was over, the purse was stored, the letters of credit were pocketed, and Hammerton was waiting for him. It required no persuasion on his part to quicken the pace of Walter: he jumped into the carriage—threw himself back with the ease of one accustomed to such luxuries, and very unlike a thriving apothecary, who sits in the middle of his vehicle in order that he may be seen by every one who passes.

Benjamin was in the rumble, the carriage drove off, and never once did Walter look towards the home of his infancy, although his poor sick old father had crawled from his sofa to catch the last glance of his son's eye, or watch the carriage which contained him: his heart sank as he saw that no last look was bestowed either upon him or his house, and he inwardly ejaculated as he retraced his steps to the sofa, and swallowed one of those delectable draughts to be taken every four hours: "Show me the man who has no local attachment, and I will show you a selfish, heartless creature."

Hammerton, who in consequence of the marriage of one of his sisters, had obtained leave of absence and had been somewhat suddenly recalled to his ship, was a straightforward, open-hearted fellow. The fun and frolic of a midshipman's berth were to him the greatest joys of life—he was up to any thing, alive to every enjoyment, steady in the performance of his duty, friendly to those in distress, ever willing to assist the less fortunate than himself. He sat by the side of his contrast;—a contrast indeed! for Walter was penurious, tyrannical by nature, proud—purse-proud, haughty. But he had three times the talent of Hammerton, and could, when his surliness was softened, be a very agreeable, lively,

witty companion. He had all the boyish levity of fourteen, as he felt that at last he was a man, his own master, free from a school, an emancipated slave. No sooner was he clear of Grosvenor-square than he rubbed his hands and exclaimed, "Now I begin life."

"—Which has been the death of many a man," replied Hammerton; and then he continued: "Pray, Murray, is that your trunk in front, with all those brass nails jammed in like the ornamental part of a nobleman's coffin?"

"Yes," replied the new-fledged midshipman.

"I don't think you'll know it again," continued Hammerton, "after it has been shaken in the hold or tumbled in the wings: the carpenter's yeoman will soon have those to decorate his store-room. Why, you must have clothes enough to fit out the mess!"

"I have no more," replied Murray, "than any other gentleman ought to have."

"If all the gentlemen as you are pleased to call midshipmen, had as many traps as you have got, the ship would never be large enough to hold them. Midshipmen are called young gentlemen, but at present the system is not altogether quite so elegant as might be found in Grosvenor-square.—By-the-by, Murray,—excuse my freedom—we sailors are rough knots, easily untied, and leaving the naked rope visible,—do you know, I think you are a confounded fool!"

"That's pleasant," replied Walter; "but perhaps you will explain?"

"Certainly," continued Hammerton. "If you saw a man who was walking through a sheltered shrubbery, where he was amused, happy, contented, dry, and comfortable, would not you think him a precious donkey to leave the shrubbery and its sheltered walks to come out upon an open terrace where the wind and the rain came pouring down—where he was exposed to cold and every devilment under the clouds, when he could have continued his quiet walk in warmth and comfort?"

"Certainly," said Walter.

"Well, then, you are exactly in that position. You have had at your command every luxury in life, and yet you give them all up to follow the worst profession ever dreamt of for any thing better than a Malay or a chimney-sweep. Instead of comfort, be prepared for every discomfort; instead

of rich dishes at seven o'clock, make friends with your stomach to digest salted horse at noon: instead of a comfortable bed to snore in for ten hours with your head supported by down pillows, with curtains to draw round your face lest a breath of cold air should disturb your slumbers, what think you of walking up and down some miserable planks for four hours;—the harder it rains and blows, the more requisite is it that you should be in it;—and when tired—ay, even to hinder sleep, for over-fatigue is as fatal to slumber as inaction,—to turn into a wet hammock to swing about like a monkey in a fair,—to go to bed hungry and to rise hungry,—to be obedient to every call,—to be uncertain of the smallest moment of time as your own,—to go when you are bidden, and to come when you are commanded,—to eat and drink out of the coarsest materials,—to have bread swarming with insects, and water dirtier and more stinking than would disgrace a ditch in Devonshire? These are but the fewest of all the miseries to which you will find a midshipman's life is heir."

"But," said Walter with much animation, "the midshipman is free; he is not the slave of a taskmaster, he is not under the eye of a misdoubting parent, he is not watched in his out-goings or in-comings."

"No," replied Hammerton, chuckling at the joke; "but he is *watched*, as you will find, rather too regularly to be pleasant. The captain watches him; the first lieutenant gives him a watch; and the officer of the watch takes care that he keeps his watch, or else it's watch and watch for him. You'll understand more of this before you are a week older; but now I'm thinking how differently people feel under different circumstances. I dare say you like this easy affair in which we are boxed up until we get to our journey's end; but I would a hundred to one sooner be in a stage-coach—for in that there's always some fun and frolic. I remember once when travelling in this kind of vehicle, we received among us the most disagreeable old woman that ever shipped a petticoat,—and that is saying a great deal for her talent of tormenting. I was a passenger with another mid, whose acquaintance you will make before to-morrow evening. We tried to please this old lady; but she kicked out one leg here, elbowed another there; would have her window up, although it was July; and whilst Smith and myself were reeking at every pore, this old she-

devils—for devils run in both sexes—~~would~~ keep fidgeting about; and although I knew that in the Black Hole at Calcutta it had been represented to those unfortunate sufferers that their chance of keeping themselves cool was to keep quiet, and I recommended the same precaution to the old lady, hinting that heat was a very desirable thing during the winter at the North Pole, but that in July in England a cool breeze and a cool body were luxuries of which we debarred ourselves by our incessant motion, it was of no use,—the old lady would continue her art of tormenting, playing, with her fat poodle-dog, nursing it one moment and sending it adrift between our legs the next. We were both too much of sailors to ill-treat a dumb animal; and although we lifted it carefully off our feet, yet we never hurt the poor thing, excepting that it never was allowed to be still for a second. Smith proposed putting his elbow through the glass, and there establishing a current of air and of abuse; but I whispered to him,—(I knew the road well, for I had been on it only the day before,)—to begin making all possible grimaces when I should give him the signal, and leave the rest to me, taking care to bark like a dog and exhibit other canine accomplishments. We then introduced the subject of hydrophobia; and certainly the horror of this malady was much, if possible, enhanced, each of us telling some wonderful stories of what we had ourselves seen in foreign parts. ‘Ah!’ said Smith, who saw the game. I was playing; ‘I never have felt easy since I was bitten by that cursed curly cur at Lisbon; and every now and then I fancy myself with a shaggy skin, and twist round to look for my tail. I’m sure I shall go mad before long; for it was about this time three years that it happened, and every July since I have never passed a dog’s-meat barrow without whiffing a little, and clapping my nose nearer than the seller admired.’

“‘Good Heavens!’ remarked the old woman, ‘I hope you won’t go mad in the coach, sir? Here—Muff, Muff!’ and she nursed her bloated beast like a baby; ‘and don’t, sir,—pray don’t bite my dog!’”

“‘I won’t, ma’am,’ said Smith with the most coaxing countenance in the world, ‘not if I can help it; but I like the smell of it a little. No, no, ma’am, if I bite anybody it sha’n’t be the dog: I suppose under such circumstances I

shall feel too much interest in my species, and revenge myself upon their tyrants.'

"'Lord, sir!' said the old woman, who kept watching Smith, who every now and then made a wry face, and got up a gentle snarl, 'I never ill used the poor creatures in my life,—did I, Muff? Do tell the gentleman, who perhaps understands you—do tell him how kind I have been!'

"Muff snarled, and Smith repeated it as well as a signal-man in a repeating-ship. We were now fast nearing a small stream. The bridge over which we ought to pass, was broken and under repair; and as the water was not deep, the coaches passed through it a little to the left of the bridge. I kept my eyes about me, and when we came close to the place I gave Smith the signal: he began to howl and bark, to the infinite horror of the old woman; he seized the dog, and pretended to bite its tail, and then looked with an eye of anger at the woman.

"'My God! coachman!' she began, letting down the window; 'murder!—stop—a madman!—I'm eaten—my dog's tail is off!' and here she was stopped, for Smith clapped his left hand out as he seized her with his right and opened the door: splash went the horses into the stream—the noise made him worse—the old lady made a struggle to escape, Smith having fixed his teeth upon her dress; when out she bounced, dog and all—smack she went into the middle of the stream, and lay kicking about like a harpooned porpoise. There was of course a halt; but we refused to have the washerwoman inside, which to be sure she did not insist upon, and she was taken on the roof to dry; Smith every moment clapping his hand out of the window, pinching her heel and barking like a dog. Believe my yarn if you can. That's one way of getting a cool coach with lots of room in it: now what the devil can we do in this grand concern, but *tell* yarns and get sleepy?"

Walter smiled, and although much amused at Hammer-ton's manner of relating the anecdote, thought that in all probability he should find himself rather overmatched than otherwise in mischief, if all the midshipmen were as frolicsome as Hammerton and Smith. He responded however to the last question remarking that "Gentlemen travelled in their own carriages,"—for upon that point he had imbibed all the parvenu pride of his father,—and that "every person

should maintain by outward appearance his rank and his station in life."

Hammerton looked at him, and, with a sneer that he could not control, remarked, "We shall soon take the starch out of you, my hero. I dare say you want your carriage and horses shipped, and will pay a morning visit to the captain according to your station in life! If you do, Master Murray, it will be on a gun-carriage. But as to your station, the first lieutenant will consider your lofty birth and give you an exalted one. I have no doubt you will be able to look down with the most sovereign contempt on all below you; and if you should fail a little for some trifling misconduct, to which I hear you have a little propensity, we will trice you up again: but take care you don't fall in love with the gunner's daughter and marry her, or you will have a scratch from her cat, who has nine tails."

Walter never condescended to answer Hammerton, but bit his lip in silent disdain, nursing his wrath, and inwardly wishing that such a vulgar fellow had never been placed so near himself. Hammerton, on the contrary, considered himself as an oldster, and consequently as having the youngster under his care, to be delivered like a mail-coach parcel to the person to whom he was directed. He had already become commanding officer, and it was evident that he felt his authority, from the manner in which he spoke; for he said to Walter with an expression of sorrow, "Poor fellow! why you are like a young bear—all your sorrows are to come, and to-morrow you will be as much out of your element as a mosquito in a gale of wind."

This rather roused the wrath of Walter, who replied in a measured tone of voice, "Pray, *sir*, do you take me for a baby?"

"No, *sir*," replied Hammerton; "but I take you for a cursed impertinent brat, and advise you to keep a civil tongue in your head, or—"

"Or what?" said Walter, bristling up like a boar in a breeze.

"Or I'll make you! There—don't answer—hold your tongue, without you want your ears a little longer than nature has made them."

"By Heaven's!" said Walter, "I'll stand this no longer!—Benjamin, open the door and let Mr. Hammerton out, and desire the postilions to turn back again."

"Go on," said Hammerton out of the window, "and drive to the George. The Peacock," said he as he resumed his place, "is envied for its gaudy plumage; but the strength of the eagle is a better safeguard than feathers. Your father put you under my care, and I do not relinquish my office until I introduce you to Captain Barker. You may then go back, or elsewhere, if you like, for me; but I have got my sailing instructions, and I shall obey them to the letter."

"Do you pretend to say," said the petulant boy, "that I can't do as I like in my father's carriage? I *will* go back, and the devil shall never force me to live in the same ship with you."

"Your father put me in command of his son and his carriage: I'm commanding officer here, and will be obeyed. And as for your not going on board, why your name is on the books of the Tribune—go you *must*: there's a word for pride to swallow—you *must* go. But don't fancy you will be detained against your will: one volunteer is worth two pressed men, and we have not come to pressing midshipmen as yet."

Murray sat back biting his lips and inwardly vowing vengeance against Hammerton: he even turned over in his mind the best mode of annoying his parents in the event of Sir Hector's death, for Hammerton's relations were tenants of his father; and in the worst passion of Murray's mind, he vowed he would extirpate such weeds, root and branch. Weeds they were in his eyes—loathsome weeds, which sprang up and poisoned all around. What right, indeed, had such parish paupers to send their sons to serve in the navy; and by what right did these upstarts domineer over their betters? Walter was ignorant that in the noble—the honourable profession in which he had entered, the daring courage, the ready zeal, the active mind, the quick in resources, the fearless in danger—weeds or not weeds—soon became the highest flowers; and had he at that moment taken the trouble to think, his own good sense would have told him, that if all the world were on one day born, and all equal, long before noon it would be settled which half were to make the beds of the other half. The lazy, the passionate, the idle, the thoughtless, the timid, the weak, the sickly, must give place to the active, the temperate, the studious, the thoughtful, the brave, the strong, the healthy; and the more wealth a man inherits, the more activity of mind it requires to regulate it. He who is indolent must become sub-

servient; he who is blindly generous must become involved; and he who trusts to another to do that which he *ought* to do himself, can have no cause of complaint if the undertaking fails.

Walter was not indolent; but his pride, his overbearing pride, scarcely allowed him to think, lest he should be thought to work. The last remark of Hammerton stung him to the quick, *must!*—there's a word for pride to swallow;—it nearly choked him; and when his throat relaxed its efforts to keep down his rage, he said with a slow voice and a most malignant sneer as he turned his eyes towards his companion, "Set a beggar on horseback, and he'll ride to the devil."

Hammerton looked at him in anger; but his generous heart soon made allowance for the petulance of youth, and he merely replied: "When you have done mourning over the loss of your parent, and eaten the cake and jam which your old servant has crammed into the corner of that gingerbread trunk, then such remarks might meet their deserts. But come, Murray, no more of this; you are endeavouring to make an enemy of the man who can be—nay, and in spite of yourself, will be—your friend. You must drop your pride; you must remember you are going amongst young men liberal by profession, and although as poor as Job, as proud as Lucifer. Take heed of the stubborn disposition of your nature. The donkey gets terrific blows on its crupper, and as it lifts its sluggard legs to resent the injury, merely kicks the air. The noble horse goes on without whip or spur—distances all animals of less active motion; but the sulky horse which refuses to go, although the same animal,—nay, perhaps of the same breed,—is beaten, and spurred, and driven in spite of itself; and, thus goaded on with bleeding sides, is not a bad picture of the youth who can do any thing, but, from stubborn pride, will do nothing, until force, actual force, compels him.

"We are now drawing towards Portsmouth; in a quarter of an hour you will stand before your captain. Remember, he is more absolute than his king; for he can make it whatever time of the day he likes, and we must set our watches to his will and caprice. Do as others have done before you,—swim with the tide, which it is useless to oppose. When you speak, answer 'Yes, sir,' and 'No, sir;' for if you were a quaker, you would find that without you added the 'sir,'

their creed, 'Let your communication be yea, yea—nay, nay, would get you a mast-heading. If you *come the quaker over the captain* or any of the lieutenants, you will have time to correct your answer as you sit for four hours at the mast-head, blowing your fingers like a Norway bear, and thinking of Grosvenor-square, which you are leaving behind.'

In justice to Hammerton, it must be remarked, that Sir Hector had urged him to disgust his son as much as possible with the service in which he had embarked; and as all men are rather partial to exaggerating either their wealth or their woes to strangers, Hammerton took especial care to finish the picture in his best style. His manner would have damped the courage of many a youngster; but Murray was not a lad to be frightened at a shadow—the very difficulties to be overcome gave him a relish for the undertaking; for he was just that kind of lad who would not have married the Venus de Medicis with ten thousand a year, if there was no opposition to the match, but would have eloped with a poor parson's ugly daughter, if the parent merely exercised his right in the shape of a negative.

"Very well, Hammerton," said he; "I take all but the hint about my ears as it was meant, kindly. I shall do my best to be civil and discreet; and as I have nothing to fear from a captain, I may approach him without any apprehension. I wish I had stopped to dine at that last stage; I think eating a capital foundation for courage,—and every body fights better when well fed. Can't we stop now?"

"It is too late," replied his companion, "for we are close to the lines, and that gateway ahead is the entrance into Portsmouth."

At this moment the postilions looked at each other—smack went the whip, the wheels turned round faster, and they entered the town in proper style. Every one, from the sentry to the sweep—every soul, from the pensive marine to the jolly tar—every Jew, tailor, draper—apothecaries, with all their household goddesses, ran to the door to see the dashing equipage; and never before did two midshipmen make a greater sensation in Portsmouth. Hammerton had his quick eye at work; but Murray looked back. The bell at The George rang for the waiters, the postilions having given the signal; and before the carriage drove up, twenty or thirty people had assembled to see the unlading of the valuable cargo.

It happened that three or four captains had agreed to dine together that evening, and who, between the numerous enterings of the waiters, who brought first a salt-cellar, then a spoon, then the bread-basket,—noodling out the time in order to keep hope alive in the hungry sons of the sea,—had huddled together by the window, wasting life by watching how others idled it away, when the noise of the approaching carriage, with the ring at the gate-bell, gave a little turn to their conversation.

"Faith," began one, "this must be the First Lord of the Admiralty, or the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. What a row these great fellows kick up! I think, Barker, we had better remind the waiters that we are waiting, or the big-wigs will take the Tribune's share of the dinner. I wish we could get the soup up before the cook splices it."

"I'll ring directly I see who comes out of this gingerbread affair," replied Barker: "I should be more inclined to think it contains some lucky son of an Indian Director, whose careful mamma had sent him down comfortably, in order that he might not feel annoyance until he takes a head-sea which will turn his head."

"And his stomach!" said another: "what a lucky thing it is to have one's father born before one, and to be sent out to have money put into one's pockets in spite of oneself! He is young enough at any rate," continued the same speaker;—"why, he has a midshipman's uniform! Oh! it must be some youngster come to join his ship; and here appears the unhappy father about to part with his fond son. Look how the old servant bobs his arm out! Why, d—n it, if it is not another youngster! Well, now then for the venerable parent!—Hulloa! what's this! Why, they have shut the door, and there goes the carriage to the stable. If those two youngsters belonged to my ship, I think I would teach them not to make such a noise in the streets. Who the devil can they be?"

"Do you sleep here to-night, sir?" said the waiter.

"Yes," said Murray.

"Chambermaid show this gentleman his room. Porter, take that trunk up into No. 4. Do you take dinner, sir?"

"Yes," said Murray surlily, for he could not understand why a gentleman could not arrive in his carriage without being so over-pestered by civility.

"A private room, sir; or the coffee-room, sir?"

"A private room, sir!" replied Murray, his upper lip turning in arrogant disdain. "Do you think I am going to dine at an ordinary?"

"No *ordinary* fellow that," said a waiter in an undertone; "I never saw so young a lad with such a look. I wonder what his name is. Oh! here it is large enough on the trunk—'Walter Murray.' Now, I should like to know who Mr. Walter Murray may be, that he drives about in a carriage and four horses, and not more than fifteen years old. The other chap has nothing to do with the carriage, that's certain, for he's in the coffee-room, and pecking away at the cold round-o'-beef like a midshipman from a long cruise."

The captains had now got to work, the soup had not been spliced, and all were in high good-humour, when the master of the inn brought in the first course.

"Who came in that carriage, landlord," said one of the true blues, "which came rattling on as if it would pound the stones into powder?"

"Two young gentlemen, sir," replied Boniface.

"Young gentlemen!" said the captain,—"*young gentlemen with four horses!* Why, who are they?"

"One is a Mr. Walter Murray, who, I understand, is going to join one of the ships at Spithead, sir."

"Tell him," said Captain Barker, "to come here to me directly. Has he dined?"

"No, sir; but he has ordered dinner in the next room."

"Well done!" said the first speaker; "a midshipman, or a boy in the second class, in a private room!—and turtle soup, I suppose?"

"He desired his servant to order dinner," quoth the landlord; "and certainly," he added with a smile, "it is rather an expensive one."

"Tell him to come here," said Captain Barker, "he belongs to my ship—and," he continued as the landlord withdrew, "is a neat nut for the devil to crack!"

"I must confess," said the first speaker, "that I have some curiosity to see this youngster who comes down to join his ship in such style. Who is he?"

"A son of Sir Hector Murray—a man of great wealth and of sterling worth: he has given me a line by the post, mentioning his son's pride and folly, and I'll begin with him as I intend to go on: he is a kind of youth who must be

brought up with a round turn, or he'll get such headway that he'll be wrecked before he can heave about."

"Mr. Murray says, sir, he'll come after he has dined."

"Oh!" ejaculated Barker, "much obliged to him for his civility. Have the kindness to tell the youngster who came down with him—a Mr. Hammerton—to come to me."

"He is in the coffee-room, sir,—I will send to him directly."

Hammerton seemed to enter almost as soon as the landlord had shut the door. He was hard at work at the beef and pickles when the messenger arrived, and he dropped his knife and fork and ran up stairs, knowing full well that his captain would ask him to dinner, and that, if he delayed to appear, he would be bundled on board in the first boat. As he entered the room, he bowed respectfully to the captains.

"Come here, Hammerton, and sit down.—Waiter, get a plate and knife and fork, and bring the soup here again." Hammerton did as he was desired. "Now," continued Barker, "tell me what kind of a lad was your companion in Sir Hector's carriage, and how it is you have separated from him."

Hammerton spoke like the straight-forward gentleman as he was, not too boldly, not too timidly, but with a modest deference, such as inferiors in rank should bear towards those above them. "He is, sir, a very curious young lad: he is older at fifteen than many at twenty: he is a bold, daring youngster: but he has never been accustomed to be controlled. I left him because I could not afford to pay my share of a dinner such as he ordered: he did not invite me to partake of it, and I was too proud to hint my poverty."

"Well said, Hammerton," remarked the first speaker, whilst Barker patted him on the shoulder, and looked at him with the pride a man feels when those who have been under his orders are praised by others. "Has he begun dinner yet?"

"No, sir," replied Hammerton, "I should think not; for I heard one of the waiters say that his servant had ordered enough for a mayor and corporation."

"Then while they are bringing up the soup for you, go and bring him here."

Away went Hammerton, and without any preface opened

the door and began,—“The captain wants you, Murray: come along as quick as you can,”

“I have sent once to him,” replied Murray, “that I should come after dinner.”

At this Hammerton burst out laughing and said, “You’ll know better before half an hour is over your head than to send such a message to the captain: but come, he has sent me for you—don’t stand gaping there like a stuck pig: come along, I say.”

“You may say what you like,” said Murray, “but I don’t care any more for the captain than I do for that sweeper in the street, and go I shall not until I have had my dinner.”

“Don’t make an ass of yourself,” continued Hammerton, getting a little on towards an angry expression; “but come along, or I must take you by force.”

“By force!” said the petulant boy; I should like to see you use force!”

“Oh,” said Hammerton, “you will not be long in being gratified;” and forthwith he seized his victim by the cuff of the coat with the left hand, and taking hold of a certain part of his unmentionables, he forced Murray’s head forward with one hand, whilst he kept back his stern with the other, and thus navigated him, in spite of all kicks and starts, through the passage. Meeting a waiter who was near the captain’s door, he desired him to open it, and in walked Mr. Murray in spite of himself. He seemed rather startled at finding himself in the presence of five captains, all in uniform, and all men not very likely to be frightened by a youngster.

“Come here, sir,” said Barker in a quarter-deck voice, which, in spite of the independent air and bearing of Murray, who had drawn himself up for impertinence directly Hammerton relinquished his grasp and allowed him to be perpendicular, went through him, and he felt, to use a common expression, cowed. “Come here, sir,” repeated his captain: “did you hear me speak to you? Pray, sir, why did you not come when I sent for you, without obliging Mr. Hammerton to execute his orders in the manner he has done—and done properly?”

“I thought—” began Murray.

“Thought, sir!” interrupted his captain; “who gave you leave to think, sir? A midshipman think!—d—n it, we are come to a pretty pass now! I ordered you, sir, to come to me; and take care you never disobey my orders. And now,

sis, that you have received the reprimand that you deserved, sit down and dine here."

Murray, astonished at this welcome of his captain, crept like a frightened dog to the chair which was placed by the side of his commander, and began the operation of eating without much appetite. This being remarked by another captain, one who afterwards enjoyed the title of a most magnificent tyrant, led to the following observation from him: "It's well for you, youngster, that you don't belong to my ship; for, by all that's sacred, if you did, you should be flogged this evening and starved to-morrow. This comes of sending midshipmen down in carriages; whereas if they were packed up like fish in baskets and bundled into carts or wagons, they would get a kind of hint as to what they might expect afterwards."

Murray's pride gave way to this uncalled for remark, and he burst out into a flood of tears. His captain, with that consideration and kindness, for which he was throughout life so respected, immediately endeavoured to reassure Murray; but the great step had been taken, his pride had given way, and all attempts to place him at his ease were ineffectual. At that moment he would have given worlds to retire and retrace his steps, and, since his feelings were hurt, he resolved to rely on his cunning. In a moment his resolution was taken: he dissembled his real sentiments under a smile; he ate without tasting, and drank without thinking.

"Pretty well that, youngster," said one,—"five glasses of wine in as many minutes! I dare say your old father, although he sent you down here like a nabob, did not give you more than a glass of port, when you came down with the children to dessert."

Murray never answered; but the sneer which curled his lip could not be mistaken.

"Hammerton," said Captain Barker, "it is now getting high time to go on board, and I don't like my youngsters to sleep on shore at Portsmouth: so, do you hear, take Murray with you on board, and make him as snug and as comfortable as you can. Tell the first lieutenant to send the gig for me at eight o'clock to-morrow morning,—we shall sail about noon. And here—stop—the blue peter must be hoisted at eight. And tell Mr. Garnet to turn all the women out of the ship, and to unmoor at daylight. Take my gig, and see this youngster's traps safe: he'll be as much adrift as a wreck in a tideway. Good night."

Murray, glad to escape, bolted out of the door; but he was recalled in the instant by his captain. "Mr. Murray, when gentlemen leave a room where they have been invited to dine, it is customary to wish their companions good night, or to bow to them: it is a mark of respect which I beg you will now manifest, and of which I trust I shall never again have occasion to remind you."

"I wish you a very good night, sir," said the captain who had made the remark relative to the wine, at the same time bowing his head and continuing, "It's pretty lucky for you, you unlicked cub, that you do not belong to my ship!" Murray heard it all, bowed and retired.

No sooner was he clear of his tormentors than he ran into his own room: the cloth was laid, the wax-lights flaring: he rang the bell and sent for Benjamin. Hammerton told him to get his traps ready, jumped down to the coxswain and ordered him to bring up some of the gig's crew to take his own and Murray's trunk on board, inwardly cursing the sulky cur, who had thus deprived him of his cruise on shore; for Hammerton, smart as he was, had no intention of going on board before the following morning.

"Benjamin," said Murray as the old servant came into the room, "we must go back to town directly. Be as quick as possible—get horses—never mind packing up, but be round in a moment. Not all the devils alive should get me on board a ship—I have had quite enough already; and my father will be pleased to see me return. Run, good Benjamin."

Benjamin was no runner—he was no footman; he stood a second in thought, and then said, "Master Walter, your father will be so pleased!"

"There—there—no long speeches; run like a lamplighter—round with the carriage—pay the bill,—look sharp! Why, you move like a snail,—there—quick! quick!" and he shoved the old servant out of the room. "I don't think," he mused to himself, "that there is necessity to leave any thing behind me. I'll get my ornamented coffin, as Hammerton called it, packed; I had better work myself than lose the contents." And away he went to pack up; whilst Hammerton, who had given the requisite orders, had started off to the Fountain, to see if any of the mids of the Tribune were on shore, and wished a passage on board without paying the heavy fare which some of those eager boatmen demand who

ply either from Common Hard or the Point. Murray, for once, was active both in mind and body; he was turning in his brain how fortunate it was that he should escape paying for his dinner, which honour he intended for his new captain. He shoved in his linen, which Benjamin had placed ready for next morning, inwardly cursing the officious fellow who thus rendered his escape subject to delay; and then came across him the certainty that if the carriage was brought round, his captain would hear the noise and detection follow. He knew he was clear of Hammerton; so, jumping down stairs, he desired that the carriage might not be brought round, and himself urged the postilions to their exertions.

In the mean time one or two seamen belonging to the gig had arrived at the George; and having inquired for the trunk belonging to the new young gentleman, were shown into his room, handled the future ornaments for the carpenter's store-room, and trudged merrily along to the boat, the coxswain remaining to show Murray the way to the Fountain, where Hammerton awaited his arrival.

Things were in this train, the trunk on one tack and the owner on the other, when the bell of the captain's room rang. When the servant entered, he was asked if the young gentlemen had gone on board. The waiter answered, that one had left the hotel and sent some of the gig's crew up; but that the other was waiting for his carriage, to which he had ordered four horses.

"This," said the tyrant captain, "is some trick of your other youngster, Barker: he has persuaded this young colt that he must drive to your *gig* in his *carriage*, and some fun will come out of this."

"Yes," said Barker, "likely enough; but I think it rather unfair on his father, who will have to pay for the frolic; and although I like frolics as much as any one, yet I think they might break in the youngster at a more reasonable expense. I must put a stop to this.—Tell the landlord to come here."

Up came Boniface, who had been arguing a point on which there was much difference; the landlord desiring to be paid for the dinner ordered, though not consumed; the others—for Benjamin and Murray both agreed in saving the money—holding that people never paid for things of which they had not partaken. Whilst this was in dispute, the waiter came and told his master he was wanted. Without, therefore, coming to a conclusion, the landlord desired his

auditors to await his return, and attended the summons of the captains, whom he knew to be impatient gentlemen, and men who liked to see all orders promptly obeyed. If Murray's love of money had not been uppermost for the moment, he would have had a clear start: the moments he lost in disputing with the waiter proved fatal to his scheme.

Barker asked about the horses; and, to his astonishment, he learned that the young gentleman was about to return to town. He desired the carriage might not be allowed to leave, and that the young wanderer should be sent to him. Down came Boniface just in time to meet the waiter: "All right, sir," said the latter; "here's the money: gentleman's gone, horses paid, and all settled." Barker had followed the landlord, and hearing this, ran without his hat, at once steering for the gate, Boniface puffing and blowing behind him like a broken-winded horse.

CHAPTER IV.

The Mid's first night afloat.

THERE WAS scarcely time for the captain to recover his breath, before the clatter of the carriage was heard, and the landlord stood ready to prevent the progress of the postilions. "Stop, Thomas!" he bawled out directly they were in hail; but Murray, fearful of some recovery of his person, called out, "Don't stop for any thing or any body, and I'll pay you handsomely." But Thomas knew the voice and the portly figure of his master, and pulled up in obedience to the order. Out popped Murray's head; and the first thing he saw was his captain. In one moment he was handed out; the captain took charge of the truant midshipman, and without saying a word to the servant, or taking the least notice of the capers of the postilions, he walked off with the youngster, got his hat at the inn, and, calling his coxswain, saw Murray into the gig, desired the crew to shove off, and merely said, "Tiller, tell Mr. Garnet to see that young gentleman made comfortable." At this moment, Hammerton came running down to Sally-Port: seeing the captain, he turned short round, ran down to the Point, popped into a boat, and away he went on board. The gig's crew took it easily, talking as they pulled; to them time was indifferent. A light flaw of wind coming off, they shipped the mast, hoisted the sail, and then lolled on the thwarts. Murray was in a sea of wonder: they took no more notice of him than they would of a dog; the only object they had in view, was to spin out the time until all duty was done on board and the hammocks piped down.

Old Benjamin having paid for the four horses, went in that dignified manner the first stage, and then lazily continued his route, arriving in London the next morning. Hammerton concluded something was wrong and was

anxious to repair it; his chance was to overtake the gig; and the two boatmen pulled heartily on the promise of extra pay, and a glass of that villanous stuff which, whilst it exhilarates, poisons the blood. They soon got sight of the white lug-sail, and it was not long before the coxswain heard, "Gig ahoy!" In a moment every man was upright in his place; the oars were out in a second, the sail lowered, the mast unshipped, and the boat's head pulled round. Hammerton jumped on board; and, taking no notice of Murray, sat down, seized hold of the yoke-lines, and said, "Give way, my lads." Even Murray, who was brooding over his capture, was sensible of a great difference: the increased labour of the men, the silence which was observed, the steady manner in which they plied the oars, was sufficient to show him the respect which was paid to his companion, and which had been neglected towards him. "Boat ahoy!" was now heard. "No, no," was answered.—"Are you coming here?" "Yes."

The men now pulled harder, the bow-oar was laid in, and Murray was alongside the Tribune. Hammerton sprang up the side, saying, "Hand up that youngster, Tiller," as if he had been a pig or a box; but Murray, active by nature, caught hold of the side-ropes, and, much to the astonishment of Tiller, who was ready to assist him, was on deck much quicker than almost any other youngster who thus made his first step on board a man-of-war. Hammerton, who knew that when the captain came on board he should in all probability get a lecture for allowing Murray to give him the slip and for losing sight of his convoy, began to tame his refractory messmate before he could recover his astonishment at the first sight of a frigate.

"Take your hat off when you come on his Majesty's quarter-deck," he began; and suiting his action to the word, he knocked it off; and then the natural goodness of his heart returning, he told one of the side-boys to pick it up, and said in a mild manner, "I only did that, Murray, to remind you that for the future you must never come on the quarter-deck without that mark of respect. You will remember my way of giving the hint until you get so used to do it, that when you come on deck in the middle of the night, your finger will go up to your hat as mechanically as a watch goes. But I must be off to the first lieutenant. Here, Weazel," continued he, calling another youngster,

who was supposed to be keeping watch, which means dozing over the gangway, "look after Mr. Murray until I come back, and take care he does not fall down the hatchway."

Weazel was one of those sly young gentlemen who sleep with one eye open, and, like all youngsters of that day, was fond of tormenting a Johnny Newcome. The very idea of having something to do was pleasant to him; for there is no greater difficulty than keeping one's eyes open when there is no duty to perform. Weazel made a kind of bob of the head, which was not noticed by Murray; for Weazel's dress, a round dirty jacket, a large pair of Flushing trousers, and a glazed hat, were not very likely to strike Murray with admiration.

"Come to join the ship?" said Weazel.

"I am," replied Murray.

"Are your traps on board?"

Murray answered, that "He had no traps which he knew of."

"No traps!" re-echoed Weazel: "what! are you one of the wash-and-wear boys—is all your kit in a worsted stocking? or are you like the marine who had only two shirts and made six of them?"

"I dare say," replied Murray, "that I have shirts enough,—but should have no objection to know the secret how to make two into six."

"You are a precious greenhorn, I see," continued Weazel. "Why, this way to be sure:—If you have two shirts, you have one on and one off, one dirty and one clean, one wet and one dry,—and there are six of them. Did you bring your bed with you?"

Murray looked at him with surprise, and said, "I suppose I have money enough to pay for my bed and my room also."

"That's true enough," replied Weazel; "but you must know where to buy them. Here, quartermaster, take this gentleman to the gunner's yeoman," (and he conveyed his meaning to the old sailor by a sly look,) "and ask him if he has a bed to spare, and show this gentleman into a decent room with white curtains and a mahogany wash-hand-stand."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the quartermaster: "This way, sir, if you please;" and he was directing Murray forward when Hammerton came on deck and called him.

"Where are you bound to, Murray?" asked Hammerton.

"I was going with this gentleman," said Murray with great simplicity, "in order to see my room and my bed."

"What! Weazel," said Hammerton, "getting him into a line before he has been five minutes on board!" and he burst out laughing at the answer of Murray, who evidently considered a ship as a floating inn, where accommodations might be had by paying for the same.

"Follow me, Murray," said Hammerton; and forthwith he led the way down the companion, saying to Weazel, "Let him rest to-night, and to-morrow we will give him such a run that we will break the neck of his pride and make a jolly fellow of him."

"Hulloa!" said Weazel, who was quite a youngster; "what, pass the officer of the watch without saluting him! I tell you what it is, young gentleman," continued the little scamp, "if you are guilty of such disrespectful behaviour, I shall perch you at the masthead to look for the wind. Go down, sir,—follow that gentleman, sir, and take care to behave better in future."

Even the old quartermaster could not help laughing, and Hammerton's titter was plainly heard below. Weazel had drawn himself up as straight as a boarding-pike, and imitated one of the lieutenants in repeating the very words which had been applied to himself not a fortnight before. Hammerton led the dejected Murray to the steerage: his visions of liberty had flown—Hammerton's words in the carriage had already been verified, and instead of one tyrant he saw himself surrounded by dozens.

"Here's a youngster come to join the ship," said Hammerton as he entered the starboard berth of the Tribune: "the first lieutenant has told me he is to mess with us, and the captain says we are to make him comfortable."

All eyes, even those which had been directed to a cribbage-board where two of the elder midshipmen were playing, were raised towards him: one midshipman, who was busy in playing over some wretched air on a still more wretched flute, just lifted his glance from the old thumbed music before him; and three or four who were playing blind hokey gave a squint and continued the game. A miserable candle, something between a dip and a rushlight, barely sufficed to show him who had left all luxury behind the nature of his dreary abode, and Murray almost wished himself again on

deck with Weazel to go in search of the dimity-curtained bed-room.

"Sit down, Murray, and we'll have some supper."

"Avaust there, boy," said the carterer; "supper's done; and it's against the rules of the mess for those who have been on leave to have any when they return. But stop, as Mr. Murray's a stranger, we'll break through the rule."

In a few minutes there was placed on the table a japanned basket, rather the worse for wear, in which was some biscuit; and close by its side was a piece of cheese which looked as if all the rats in the ship had been pecking at it: a black jack of swipes completed the display, and the fastidious Mr. Murray was told to fall to with what appetite he had. Hammerton gave directions as to a hammock, and then it was ascertained that the good man to whom Sir Hector had entrusted the outfit had omitted the bed. A mattress and some purser's blankets were spread upon the deck, and this delightful retreat from care was voted ready for its tenant. In the mean time Murray's mind was undergoing a rapid change: he saw his position; he knew it was useless to swim against the stream, and swallowing his pride, although he could not screw up his courage to swallow the swipes, he assumed a look of more contentment; and when Hammerton returned, he entered into some conversation, giving an account of his attempted escape, with the unexpected interposition of the captain. This was not altogether very pleasant to Hammerton, for he knew that Murray had been placed under his care, and that it was needless to conjure up excuses when no excuse in the least degree satisfactory could be made: like a wise young man, he was convinced it was of no use to annoy himself about the past, and as he could not dive into futurity, he made a compromise with his memory not to bother him, and he began to ask all the news since he had left—mentioned the orders he had brought on board—and thus the time crept on until the master-at-arms popped his unwelcome head in the berth, "saying, "Nine o'clock, gentlemen; please to put the light out."

The lantern was borrowed, and Murray was conducted to his bed. He looked at it with no small surprise: it was impossible for him to disguise his disgust, and it was not until then that the pride of the haughty boy gave way. He who could have brooked any thing rather than show himself conquered, was now completely subdued; and as he lay down,

without undressing, on the bed, more than one tear started from his eyes. Hammerton saw this, promised to make him more comfortable the next night, advised him to turn in regularly, and finding that his presence only made the matter worse, wished him good night, and, like a mule-driver in South America, rolled himself up in his scanty bed, and was soon in a sound sleep.

Mr. Weazel's love of mischief now began to show itself. "It would be capital fun just to cut down the Johnny Newcome by the feet," said this urchin; "that would not hurt him, and in all probability would do him much good; as he would get accustomed to tricing up his own hammock, and thus receive one salutary lesson before the ship sailed."

The officer of the watch, the ship being moored and all boats hoisted up, considered himself entitled to a nap; so, looking round to see that all was right and quiet, he desired the mate of the watch to call him at six bells, at which time the tide changed, to keep a good look-out and not allow any shore-boats to come near the ship, after which directions he went below. When he was supposed to be asleep, the mate called Weazel, who had been stretched out on the signal-lockers, one eye shut and the other staring, and repeating the words of the lieutenant, he also went below out of the cold, rolled himself up in a cloak, and closed his eyes in forgetfulness. Weazel, who did not care about sleep but preferred fun, now called the quartermaster; the same orders were given to him, with directions that if he (Weazel) should not come up before five bells, to take care and give him a hail; upon which he went below, leaving the rough old sailor to look out for the ship, which he did by going to the signal-lockers and bringing himself to an anchor on them.

As the bell struck four, the "All's well" went round the ship, the sentries walked the gangways, and the old quartermaster, who had been in Howe's action, began running up the log of his memory, every now and then humming a bit of a stave which grew less and less in sound and in length, until it subsided into something very like a snore; and thus his Majesty's ship the Tribune floated on the waters at Spithead with only four or five marines awake, all the rest, with the exception of Weazel, being snug enough below, fast asleep and likely so to remain.

Weazel now got down to the steerage; the sentry was

leaning against the after-bulkhead so nearly asleep as not to heed him; and whilst the young scamp was groping his way to find out his victim's berth, he fell over something on the deck and tumbled alongside of Murray. The proud boy had just dozed off, and had fallen into incoherent dreams. The tawdry servants of Grosvenor-square were standing ready to receive their young master; the warm hall was a welcome from the cold without; the rich repast tempted even the half-cloyed appetite of the spoiled boy; the spacious bed-room, the clean furniture, the comforts of life—all won him to repose. Anon came the rumbling of carriages—Hammer-ton's figure—the captain's sudden appearance—a faint glimpse of the features of Boniface and his waiters; and then the wit, even in sleep, which prompted the thought—"Curse your chattering waiters! no waiters are worth a straw but tide-waiters and dumb-waiters: had this rascal been dumb, I should have been back again." The tyrant captain's words and proposed works came across his recollection with a cold shiver; he had mentioned flogging—pride turned away at the word;—he was on the waters, the boat lazily pursuing its way: then came the shudder as the bread-basket and black jack darkly pictured themselves in the foreground; and as the ideas got more confused, the black jack mixed itself up with the captain's face. At the moment when the bread-basket seemed to dance a well-bred caper with Hammerton, Weazel's toes came in contact with the pillow, and he rolled over the fallen boy, himself falling with his nose against Murray's thick shoes, the one rousing up at the sudden intrusion, the latter letting out a few words more frequently in the mouths of midshipmen than in the pages offered to the public. When the first volley of exclamations had escaped Weazel, he thought of his fallen dignity, and assumed the officer, forgetting that he had been left on deck to look after the ship. "Hulloa! sentry, bring your light here. Who is this fellow lying about the decks with his clothes on?—send for the master-at-arms. Who the devil are you?—rouse up. Why, you are as hard to weigh as the best bower, and rigged in dock too like a Liverpool ship!"

Poor Murray, unused to such ungente intrusions, remained flat, for he still thought himself in a bed; then, having the intention of getting *out*, he found he had only to get *up*. He rubbed his eyes, astounded at finding a lantern poked into

his face, and was so much surprised at seeing a soldier close alongside of him, that he could only say, "Where am I?"

"Where are you?" replied Weazel: "why, where you have no business to be! Don't you know the orders that no person is to lie about the decks, and no one to turn in all standing like a trooper's horse?—Oh," continued the young scamp, who pretended just to discover the mistake, "it's you, is it, Mr. Murray? Hammerton ought to have mentioned this. But go to bed; I hope you may not be disturbed again: but you must take your clothes off; why, tomorrow you'll look like a walking blanket! Sentry, lend Mr. Murray a hand to unrig himself, and take care how you lift his stays—good night!" and away went this urchin on deck again, full of mischief as an egg is of meat. He knew from his own practice that the quartermaster would take a calk, and being balked in his cruise below, he was resolved to make it up upon some one. Very gingerly he stepped on deck. Not a sound was to be heard: the sentries thought it better to be posts than to walk their posts, so they were on each side lolling over the gangways. The quartermaster's nose announced his situation, and forthwith Weazel stepped towards him. The old fellow seemed to know that he had no right to sleep, and talked a little in his dreams, as if to prove he was not quite in slumber, and thus he betrayed his thoughts, and perhaps what he remembered with most pride:—"29th May 1794," he began, then came a slight snore—"starboard tack—double-reefed topsails"—snore again—"led through the French line—touching up the Montague, and think I hear the admiral now giving orders to set the top-gallant sails—signal up for close action"—snore—"slapped at it—saw Polly Jones handing the powder, gallant creature!—fire away, lads"—snore. At this moment, when the old fellow was in the middle of the action, Mr. Weazel lifted up the quartermaster's legs, gave him a haul, and down slipped the warrior from the signal-lockers, making sundry most uncomfortable noises with his head against the brim, and landing on his stern on the quarter-deck. "Run aboard of us, by the piper!" said he; and up he jumped like a lamp lighter.

"Fast asleep, eh!" began Weazel: "a very pretty fellow you are to be trusted!"

The old fellow rubbed his head, got his hat on again,

and coolly answered, "Why, Mr. Weazel, if you had been on deck, I should not have shut my eyes in order to rub up that battle."

In the mean time the sentries were all walking about again, and his Majesty's ship had a watch.

"Hold your tongue, if you please," continued Weazel, "and don't speak until you are spoken to. Get me a small fish-hook somewhere: trot, and look sharp."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the old fellow, who took the joke in good part, although he was none the better for the stern-board he had made—or, as Weasel said, "for having gone down by the stern so fast." And jumping below to his berth, he soon returned with a mackerel-hook which he happened to have in his bag.

"Here's one, Mr. Weazel," said he on his return, "that will hold any fish you'll catch to-night."

"Ay," said Weazel, "that's a good one: run and get me a long stout ropeyarn." This was soon managed; and the gentleman, who had studied the art of tormenting thoroughly, fastened the yarn to the hook, and saying, "Now see if you can't forget Lord Howe for once, and keep your eyes open," down went the youngster to carry on his fun.

He had now got the bearings and distance of his victim, and went to work quite sure of success; whilst Hammerton, who had roused up in consequence of the noise occasioned by Weazel's fall over Murray, had waited until the mischievous elf had returned on deck, and knowing that he would pursue his frolic, told Murray to change beds with him; and with much care and kindness he put the youngster into his hammock, tucked him up, and not minding the want of sheets himself, for he was used to all rough work, he lay down on the deck, and imitated the precaution of Mr. Weazel,—which was to keep one eye open, twisting up his handkerchief, and keeping all ready for action. Weazel was soon at work, and Hammerton saw him fasten the hook to the blanket. Weazel then retired the length of the ropeyarn, and in a minute afterwards away went the blanket, and away went Weazel; he was up the hatchway, on the main-deck blanket and all in a second.

"Well done, Master Weazel!" said Hammerton; "but I'll pay you off in your own coin!" So he leisurely walked to Weazel's hammock, and taking therefrom a blanket, rolled himself up in another, leaving Weazel's all loose for

another haul. Weazel was soon down again and up again, having made another successful cruise, and stowed both blankets away in the stern-boat. Hammerton took another from the same place; and five bells having struck, the mate of the watch was roused and all offensive operations stopped. At six bells, with the change of the tide, came two very unwished-for companions,—the officer of the watch and a heavy fall of rain. The wind came off the land, veering about; and the officer of the watch, the mate, and Weazel, all took shelter under the heavy canopy of heaven. When the lieutenant was on deck, all eyes were open; he asked the mate what weather they had had since four bells, and the mate responded as if he had been watching in reality.

The breeze and the rain freshened towards midnight; and when Weazel was relieved and went below, there were too many eyes open for any more of his frolics. A minute was ample time for him to get into his hammock; and a sixtieth part of that time was sufficient to convince him that his blankets were on a cruise. Out he turned, and directed his operations towards his supposed victim. Hammerton was on the look-out for this; and when Mr. Weazel began to uncover him, he started up and administered such a flagellation as kept him warm for some time, and when Weazel was nearly asleep—for it was doubtful if he ever was so much off his guard as to shut both eyes at once,—he was welcomed by the arrival of the two soaking blankets, thrown over him, and mingling their dewy drops with the before dry bedding.

This little anecdote is related principally as it was the means of bringing Murray forward in a prominent manner the next morning.

CHAPTER V.

A Pugilistic encounter.—The Tribune under weigh.

THE morning of the 16th of September was ushered in by a sweet squall from the south-west; the rain fell in torrents, and his Majesty's ship Tribune presented about as miserable a picture of happiness as the imagination of a man beaten down by blue devils and under the infernal torments of a headache could fancy. The thick haze of the morning, the dirt which in newly-fitted-out ships is excessive—the wet, the dreary dulness of that morning struck a chill upon Walter. Glad to escape from his wretchedness below, for the gratings had been placed on the hatchways to prevent the wet from reaching the lower deck, and two hundred and fifty men had, until five o'clock in the morning, if not totally exhausted, rendered the air below very unlike the cool breeze which blows pure over a snowy mountain—he tumbled out of his swinging bed upon a wet swab which the prudent solicitude of Mr. Weazel had provided in case any accident might occur to his victim during his first night's uncomfortable slumber on board. It was placed as a convenient mat, and, fortunately, was used before his feet were covered with stockings. To this succeeded the horrors of a first toilet in the steerage of a frigate, and the mortification of a wilful boy who suddenly finds that by his own folly he has relinquished the comforts for the miseries of life. It is in vain to paint this picture; no one can express how severely the mind may be wounded, and what an effort it requires to conceal the sufferings. Walter was no boy to cry amongst boys—his pride forbade it. He had felt abashed in the presence of his captain, and he could have cheerfully stood the rebuke which occasioned it had he been prepared: taken unawares, he was unable to resist the first impulse of Nature, and she was victorious. Now he was on his guard; and when Weazel, in kindly offering to place his basin in a bet-

ter position, capsized it over the half-clad son of Sir Hector, the midshipman of one night showed himself capable of revenging an insult by striking his tormentor a most undeniable blow on the nose. The basin was dropped in a moment, Weazel was stripped for a fight, and the first round had been fought before Hammerton had time to interpose.

"Murray," Hammerton began, "this must not be; it's against all regulations."

"He struck me," said Weazel, "and I will have satisfaction."

"Certainly, certainly," said half a dozen youngsters, who were always ready for some fun. "A ring! fair play's a jewel! Mr. Long Togs is not going to come Captain Grand over Weazel; and if Hammerton interferes, we will soon get an oldster on our side to see fair play. At him, Weazel!"

Weazel went at him directly; and Murray, who was by no means averse to the fight, more especially when he learned all his antagonist's projected annoyance against him, received him warmly: he stood head up boldly, and returned more than blow for blow. The youngsters generally sided with their old messmate; but, like gallant little fellows, they cheered on Walter, and kept calling out, "Bravo, Greenhorn!" "Now, Long Togs!" "Hurrah, young Hector!" And whatever might be the probable result, either for or against their inclination, it was a regular stand-up fight—fair play and no favour. Walter was soon discovered to be not only the most scientific, but the strongest; and Weazel, after a visible change had come over his features, hauled down his colours and surrendered. Murray immediately stepped forward and offered him his hand, which Weazel accepted, saying, "I did my best; but, confound your school exercises! you have more knowledge." At once all angry feeling passed away; it was decided that Murray was the best man; and although Weazel looked forward for another more prosperous result, he in reality became the friend of his antagonist, and lent him all the assistance in his power.

The very circumstance of a youngster not fourteen hours on board the ship having fought his first battle, and having bravely stood forward against one who, to use a familiar expression, fought like a cock on his own dunghill, served to exalt the victor much in the eyes of his new messmates, and a more kindly feeling was instantly shown towards him.

Those who knew Weazel as their better man at once seemed to acknowledge Murray as a superior; whilst those who were beyond his reach were not backward in their praises. Walter soon found that to begin well is a great point; and he shrewdly enough considered that it was easy to maintain a position carried against an inferior force, and that the best way to calm the anger of an opponent, was by a generous behaviour after the victory.

He dressed and went on deck.

"Hulloa!" said the first lieutenant, who was as busy as first lieutenants like to be, "who have we here with a swelled face and black eye, out of uniform, and strutting about like a peacock? Who the devil are you, sir?"

"I am Mr. Walter Murray, sir."

"Walter Murray, sir?" reiterated the first lieutenant; "and how came you on deck in that dress? Come here, sir: pray what is the matter with your face?—you seem as if you had been fighting."

"It was last night," replied Murray: "a boy attacked me in the street, and I punished him."

"Faith, youngster," replied Mr. Garnet, "he seems to have punished you! Where was Mr. Hammerton when this happened?"

"He was not with me, sir: it was before he met us in the boat, when he came off in the other boat."

"Why, what nonsense is this!" said the first lieutenant. "Quartermaster, tell Mr. Hammerton I want him."

Murray now found that, from a generous wish to save Mr. Weazel, he had involved his friend, and told his first falsehood. And he was right: Hammerton got a serious rebuke for having lost sight of his charge, and having thus allowed him to be attacked and perhaps plundered by any dirty vagabond of a boy, or a more likely prowler, in the shape of a female pirate. In saving himself by telling the truth, he implicated Murray; the whole affair came out, and Mr. Garnet read Murray a lecture which accorded well with the advice of Sir Hector. Whilst he gave him credit for a proper spirit, he rebuked him for the ungentlemanly rencontre; and whilst he remarked upon the generosity of feeling which prompted him to save his beaten antagonist, he deprecated the falsehood by which it was done; and gave Walter clearly to understand that the next lie, white or black in which he detected him, should be followed by a punishment as disgraceful as it should be severe.

"Take him below, Mr. Hammerton," he continued; "put him in his uniform: mind, he is in your watch—to be stationed in the mizen-top—one of the captain's aides-de-camp at quarters—in the third division—and to have charge of the jolly-boat. Look after him, Hammerton, and tell him in a kind manner that I shall teach him to ride on the cross-trees if ever his tongue gets the better of his heart.—Pass the messenger below—turn the hands up—unmoor ship. Carpenters! ship the bars! There—get out of the way, youngster!"

In a minute Mr. Walter Murray found himself stationed and quartered; the orders given for the first step towards removing him from his native country; himself already despised, his talent at lying made evident, in a scrape with his captain for having attempted to run away without even facing the danger which he fancied awaited him; in awful subjection to those in authority above him—in a hornet's nest with his equals, and as yet unheeded by his inferiors.

He was soon in harness, and again on deck. Walter's mind was naturally active, and had it not prompted him to use his curiosity, the close smell below would have driven him on deck. Here he found himself always in the way, as intruders generally are,—called youngster by the first lieutenant, and shoved about right and left by all who approached him. "Pride will have a fall," as the copy says; and Murray, like a sensible lad, allowed his pride to fall without hurting himself. He seemed to shake off all remembrance of home; and when the men stepped out, as they leaned their weights against the capstan-bars, to the tune of a fife and drum, his heart beat lighter—his mind felt easier.

No sooner was one anchor weighed, than the messenger was shifted, and the ship hove short upon the other cable; and at this moment, when the bars were unshipped, the gig returned on board without the captain. A note was handed to the first lieutenant, who immediately called out, "Get a gun ready forward;—quartermaster, convoy signal at the mast-head." The gun was reported ready, and was fired as the stop of the signal was broken. Walter watched the harmless smoke as it curled over the ship, and kept his eye fixed upon a ring which retained its form although blown far away to leeward, and which was occasioned by some grease having been placed round the muzzle of the gun. Weazel, who was stationed abaft, saw what Murray's eye was directed to, and approaching him, said, "That is curious, Murray."

"It is," replied Murray, "and I was puzzling my head to think how that ring is formed of one part of the smoke, when the rest is unattached and is blown away."

"God bless you!" said Weazel, "nothing so easy to explain. That ring is where the shot went through; and if you want to see how it is made, you have only to look into the gun when they fire it off. The shot comes out so quick, that it jams all the smoke together, through which it passes and blows away the rest. You have heard of the wind of a shot: I've known it upset a jolly-boat at a quarter of a mile; and last year, when we fired a salute as the port-admiral passed the ship, the old boy's wig was blown off, and the little hair he had left on his head was turned black with the smoke."

"It must be very dangerous," replied Murray, still watching the ring, "to fire a shot amidst such crowds of shipping. I wonder no one is hurt."

"Wonder indeed!" replied Weazel; "you'll see by-and-by how nicely our gunner can fire a gun. What a family of daughters that man has, to be sure! If you want to see them, only go and ask him for an introduction. Tell him 'the first lieutenant desires him to fire another gun, that you may see the shot come out.' Here, quartermaster, just introduce Mr. Murray to the gunner: he wishes to see his daughters."

"Shall I show him the one in the cabin which you married the last cruise, Mr. Weazel?" said the knowing old sailor.

"Yes," said Weazel with indifference; "and I make no doubt Mr. Murray will soon be as well acquainted with her as I am, and cut me out in that quarter."

The design of the mischievous Mr. Weazel was, however, again frustrated, in consequence of the appearance of Ham-merton, who came aboard in order to take Murray below, the first lieutenant having given the order to pipe to breakfast. In the mean time the captains from the different merchant ships came on board for convoy instructions, and reported their vessels ready for sea, receiving in reply an order to unmoor; for which purpose a general signal was afterwards given by the fore-topsail of the Tribune being loosed and another gun fired. Active preparations were now going forward: the women were all turned out of the ship; the shore-boats desired to shove off, although many lingered

round the frigate; there was a constant intercourse with the other ships; and about eleven o'clock the young gentlemen were summoned to attend on deck, as the captain was coming on board.

It has often been remarked, and with great truth, that there is no respect more conspicuous than that which is shown to a captain when he is received on board his own ship; neither can any stranger witness a scene more likely to impress him with the absolute power of the little monarch afloat, than in the very proper manifestation of respect so readily offered. It was not lost upon Murray: it filled his mind with an ambition to have equal devotion paid to himself—the hope of youth, which manhood so seldom realises, broke upon him, and all the Weazels in the world, with all the miseries of the midshipmen of the time to which we refer, could not at that moment have weaned him from the Navy.

"Where is Mr. Murray?" said the captain, as soon as he had returned the salute of his officers, and had spoken some words concerning the outward appearance of the ship to the first lieutenant. "Hoity toity!" said the captain, "what is this I see! Pray, sir, with whom have you been fighting?"

"With Mr. Weazel," replied Murray.

"Where is that little scamp Weazel?"

Mr. Weazel, who had heard the captain ask for Murray, and who knew well enough the probable consequence of having fought him below, instantly ran over to another midshipman, who was ordered to go on board one of the convoy to give some instructions, and said, "Thompson, the first lieutenant desires you will attend below to the stowing away of the boatswain's stores just come on board, and I am to go round the convoy." Whereupon Thompson dived below, glad enough to escape a drizzling rain, and Weazel got out of the ship in order to let the captain's rage subside a little before he faced him.

"Mr. Weazel, sir," replied the midshipman of the watch, "is just gone into the jolly-boat on duty."

"That is a little scamp, that Weazel!" continued the captain; "but I'll make an officer and a gentleman of him yet. Mr. Murray, I am excessively displeased with you, because I had hoped that from your situation in life you would have been above such low conduct. A gentleman indeed who drives up to the George with four horses to

his carriage, twelve hours afterwards to be fighting like a common chimney-sweep! For shame, sir, for shame! Where's Mr. Hammerton?"

"Here, sir," replied Hammerton.

"How came you, sir, last night to disobey my orders? Did I not tell you to take care of this youngster,—not to lose sight of him, to take him on board, and to deliver certain messages to the first lieutenant?"

"Yes, sir," replied Hammerton, "you certainly did; and I only left Mr. Murray whilst he prepared his unpacked trunks to go on board; and thinking some of the midshipmen might want a passage, I went to the Fountain."

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Hammerton," interrupted the captain, "to make my gig the midshipmen's passage-boat: I hope this will not happen again. Take this youngster under your charge. You know his failings; mind! I look to you for their correction. If I find him at any of his school-tricks here, he shall not escape the proper punishment, nor you my severest reproof. Why did you allow this battle to take place?"

"Mr. Murray struck Mr. Weazel, the blow was returned, and the mischief was done before I could interfere."

"And pray who had the best of it?" continued the captain.

"Mr. Murray, sir," replied Hammerton.

"Let me hear no more of it.—Mr. Rackum, turn the hands up!—up anchor!"

Mr. Rackum, the boatswain, wound his call, and the tramp of the men followed the command. Immediately the bars were shipped, the cable brought to the messenger, the order to heave round given; then the fife again struck up, and in five minutes the Tribune was lying at a short stay peak, and the signal was up for the convoy to weigh. During this time Mr. Weazel had got on board, and crept to his station abaft the mizen-mast, where he kept dodging the captain so as to keep out of sight. "Loose sails!" was no sooner given as an order, before Weazel made a run at the mizen-rigging, and got safely housed in the top before the captain had seen him.

"Ready forward!" said the first lieutenant; "ready on the main-topsail-yard! ready abaft!"

"All ready!" squeaked Weazel.

The captain looked aloft, directly he heard the voice "Let

fall sheet home!" The topsails were shortly at the mast-head; the yards braced for canting the ship to port; the bars again shipped; the anchor aweigh catted, fished; and his Majesty's ship Tribune, under her three topsails and jib, stood out towards St. Helen's, her ensign and pendant blowing proudly out. When clear of Spithead, the Tribune hove-to. By this time every rope was in its place, flemished down—excepting the clue garnets, which were kept ready for running; the watch called, and only one boat alongside—that boat was retained by the captain, in order to send some letter by the night's post.

"Mr. Murray," he said, as he descended the companion, "have you written to your father?"

"No, sir," replied Murray.

"No, sir!" repeated the captain: "is it possible that you have already forgotten his injunctions? Come into my cabin, sir, and write to him directly."

Murray went down; and when the paper and ink were placed before him, he kept biting the end of the pen, not knowing how to begin.

"Have you done?" said the captain as he took his eye off his own letter, yet continuing to write.

"I don't know, sir, what to say."

"You are not such a fool as that, Mr. Murray," replied the captain. "Tell him you have joined your ship—that your captain has overlooked your first fault—that the ship is under weigh for Halifax; and give him some general idea of your feelings since you have been on board. Why, you have enough to say to fill a ship's muster-book. Come, look sharp—I shall not keep the boat for you; and mind, sir, I expect you to be ready when I am."

The idea once given, Murray's own talent supplied the rest, and he gave vent to his feelings in the following letter, almost the first he had ever written to his father, beyond the half-yearly announcement of when the holidays were to commence—a kind of up-and-down pleasurable toil, in which more paper is wasted and more pens nibbed than in one day's hard work in any office in London.

"MY DEAR FATHER,—I suppose Benjamin, if he did not forget it on the road, told you that I got safe to Portsmouth, and very nearly got safe back again: the fact is, if that old blockhead had moved his stumps properly, I should now have

been in Grosvenor-square, wishing to be where I now am. The captain has desired me to write to you; so I do it, although I have nothing to say, excepting that I have already been in two rows—fought one battle and got a dark eye,—but I beat my adversary. I can't help telling you that I think you have behaved very badly to me, and you must have written all about the business to the captain; for this morning, when he put me under the care of that yellow-faced fellow Hammerton, he said, 'If I find him at any of his school-tricks here, he shall not escape the proper punishment.' I think it very ill-natured of you, who told me how much you had my interest at heart, to have written this to the captain; and certainly, if you continue to write like this, I know I shall never get over it. I hope you are better, and that you will not forget me: you had better direct your letters to Halifax—that is the place the captain's are to be sent to. As to him, I think he is the worst-looking man I ever saw: he speaks always as if he were going to swallow one up; and when he comes on board we are all obliged to go up-stairs in the wet and take our hats off whilst he comes up the side. He found fault with me, Mr. Weazel, the boy I fought with, and Hammerton, and then turned his hands up with the boatswain: I don't like him at all. He is now sitting opposite to me, every two minutes looking up to see that I am writing, and he watches me as if I was going to rob him. The boat is waiting for this, and the captain has done his letter, therefore I cannot tell you any more news, because he won't let me: he says the boat sha'n't wait for any midshipman's scrawls. If all your friends are like him and Hammerton, I don't want to extend my acquaintance. I am determined to do all I can to get sent back again; although I should like to be able to find fault with every body, and have every body take their hats off when they speak to me. Your dutiful son,

"WALTER MURRAY."

"Have you finished your letter?" said the captain.

"Yes, sir," said Walter, as he folded it up.

"What have you told your father?" continued the captain.

"Just what you told me, sir;—that I was on board, and that we were going to Nova Scotia, and that he had better direct his letters to Halifax."

"What did you say about me, sir?"

Murray looked like a criminal as he answered, "Nothing very particular, sir."

"Let me see the letter." Murray hesitated. "Why, I don't want to read your rubbish, you young suspicious monkey! I want to add one word to your old father, and tell him what *I* think of *you*; which, from what has happened, will not be the most flattering portrait that I hope I shall be able to make of you; and if I fail, I can hand you over to Captain C., that gentleman you had the pleasure of meeting at dinner: if he cannot tame you, by the powers! you must be worse than a hyena." The captain took the letter, turned it back, and added,

"Your son is a boy of high spirit, which he has already proved; he will do well enough after the sea-sickness has moderated his bile. I will take every care of him, and rest assured he shall write to you often. I have no doubt, from Hammerton's account, that he will like the life you have chosen for him: there are always a few rough steps at first, but when we get upon the level, the service is smooth enough. We are now under sail. I trust to hear better accounts of your health, and to return after a prosperous trip about the latter end of January."

The letter was folded, sealed, and sent; Captain Barker read his additions to Murray, saying "I have written just what I think of you. Now, sir, take yourself off! Ask Mr. Hammerton about your station, and mind you are always to be found in it. And here—stop a minute—I have heard you are rather addicted to telling lies. Now, as sure as I catch you out in one—ay, of the most trivial kind,—I will have you married before your father's consent can arrive; and you may ask Mr. Weazel to introduce you to one of the gunner's daughters."

"He offered," replied Murray, with the most innocent face in the world, "to do it this morning, and sent one of the men to the gunner, sir, to tell him that I should be happy to make her acquaintance."

The captain could not resist smiling, and replied, "His introduction will not signify so much as mine. You will dine with me to-day. Mind, I have forgiven your first fault: beware of the second. Be off!"

CHAPTER VI.

Departure of the Fleet.—The first Dinner at the Captain's table.

"WELL," thought Murray as he got clear of the cabin-door, "this is a strange kind of life I have embarked in! I hardly dare open my mouth for fear of saying something wrong, and I always appear to be in somebody's way.—There,—thank you, sir,—I am very much obliged to you for that!" said he, as a sailor banged a wet swab across his stockings: the fact is that Robert Dunlap was swabbing the larboard side of the waist with his back to the cabin-door, and as he lashed the swab from side to side of him, he stepped backwards, of course not seeing those behind him, who ought to have kept clear of him.

"Begs your pardon, *sir*," said the sailor, as he touched his hair with his right hand; "I did not see you, *sir*."

Somehow this little event was consolatory to Murray; there was evidently great respect in the manner with which the man addressed him; and if his pride had been mortified before, it received some soothing from the words of the sailor. Shortly afterwards Murray went on deck. The last boat had left, the main-topsail was filled, and the ship, about two points off the wind, was standing out from the land. The convoy were crowding all sail, and the Tribune resembled the schoolmistress of a country village, who sees all her little ones before she herself moves. Murray was standing abaft the lee-side by the taffrail, watching the town of Portsmouth, which every moment grew less and less to the eye. Before him was one large world of water, into which he was rushing apparently blindfolded; whilst behind him grew less and less in the distance all he knew of life—of home—of happiness. Yet Walter shed no tear: nor did he, boy as he was, look forward with any fear as to the result; he felt assured from what he had seen below that he would always have fair play shown him,—that Hammerton, whom he hated most cordially, would not allow him to be ill-treated

by those stronger than himself, and for those who were his equal in size and strength he was a match. Still, however, he kept his eye upon the lessening shore, lost in a kind of pleasant meditation which even the trifling motion of the ship had not disturbed, until at last objects grew less distinct and were forming themselves into one long loom of land,—the town—the ships—the shore, alike undistinguishable to the naked eye; and Murray had no telescope to bring objects closer.

"Don't you dine with the captain to-day?" said Weazel as he tapped Murray on the shoulder.

"Yes," said Murray, starting from his revery. "Why?"

"I only wanted to know if I could be of any use to you: I mean, if you haven't got your proper dress, I might be able to assist you."

"I have got every thing, I believe," said Murray: "I suppose I have only to walk in as I am."

"—And then you will walk out again immediately. Why, you must go in full uniform! A dinner on board a ship is a kind of state affair: in merchant ships they call it the state cabin; and in a frigate the captain is a king, and always has proper respect shown him. I suppose you have got your knee breeches and buckles?"

Murray looked at his own legs, and smiled as he said, "Why Weazel, I fancy it would be no common tailor to make knee breeches to fit me!"

"Why, to be sure," said Weazel, "it would puzzle a shore-going snip; but we have one who will do it for you quickly enough. Let's see,—there's four bells striking now."

"I only hear one bell," replied Murray.

"It is striking four times, and that means two o'clock. At six bells the captain dines; you will hear the drum beat: you must be dressed in knee-breeches, silk stockings, buckles, a long coat, your cocked hat and sword, your hair powdered and dressed, and with ruffles to your sleeves. Have you got all those things?"

"Not one but the cocked hat and sword;—I may have a pair of silk stockings: but as to the rest, I have seen them, to be sure, when my father went to the Lord Mayor's feast; but for one of my age to have such things, it never entered my head."

"Well, Murray, it's no use thinking about it; you must

remedy the omission by using a little despatch. Let me see,—there's Strop the ship's barber, he of course has hair-powder; if not, you can buy some—Scales always has plenty of that. Then your confounded long trousers, we had better look after that first; I'll send one of the mizen-top-men with you, for I can't leave the deck—it is my watch: do you go below, get out your best pantaloons and give them to the lad; I'll tell him to take them to the tailor, and get you fitted out at once."

"Why," said Murray, "can't you lend me a pair without altering mine? yours would fit me—you are just about the size."

"Very true," replied Weazel; "I have a pair,—I will send them to you: but now, look sharp. Here, you Maxwell, show this gentleman to Mr. Rackum's cabin; and tell the ship's barber he wants his hair curled and powdered. Look sharp—down you go, Murray, attend to him, Maxwell, do you hear?"

Away went the unconscious Murray down the after-companion; whilst Maxwell, who had received his lesson from Weazel when in the mizen-top, jumped down the main-hatchway and lodged Murray in Rackum's cabin; the boat-swain being on deck, and not very likely to leave it until they piped to supper. When Murray was shut in, away went Maxwell for Strop; but Weazel, always active when any of his own fun was in the wind, had already told the barber what he was to do, and the man, like all seamen who enjoy the frolic of having a greenhorn *in a line*, jumped down in the steerage, and appeared with an old comb, a pair of gaping scissors, and two pieces of rusty ramrods lashed together to represent curling-tongs. Murray told him to dress his hair in the manner the other midshipmen wore theirs when they dined with the captain.

"Ay, ay, sir," said Strop. "Have you your powder-box and a puff, sir?"

"No," said Murray, not willing to appear ignorant of customs: "my foolish servant forgot to send them. I suppose you have some in your shop for sale?"

"Plenty, for the matter of that, sir, of puffs; but you must buy the powder at another place."

"Oh yes," interrupted Murray, "at Mr. Scales's; Mr. Weazel told me he sold powder: can you show me the way?"

"Certainly, sir," said Jack Strop, who managed to keep his countenance and act his part uncommonly well: "this way if you please, sir,—down this ladder, sir; you will find him in his shop." And forthwith Mr. Murray descended the after-ladder into the cockpit; and there he saw Mr. Scales sitting apparently at his shop with a book in which he was writing, and to all intents and purposes apparently a shop-keeper; his store presenting, to the astonishment of Murray, candles, sugar, raisins, and divers other useful articles and *comestibles*.

"Have you any hair-powder for sale?" said Murray.

"Yes, sir," replied Scales (he had been tutored by Weazel): "how much do you want?"

"Only a small quantity," replied Murray, "to dress my hair to-day."

"I always keep it in small parcels; here is a paper quite sufficient, sir, and by your leave I will enter your name on my books—we can settle the account another time."

Murray took the flour, thanked Mr. Scales for his obliging attention, and returned to Rackum's cabin. Here he found Weazel, who had brought in a pair of knee-breeches, and had affixed two large sailor's silver buckles into the shoes.

"Get your silk stockings, Murray," said Weazel, "and get your lower rigging up before you decorate your mast-head. That's your sort—what a leg for a boot! it's lucky green is not in fashion, or the pigs might mistake them for cabbage-stalks! Now then, Strop, set to work: why, your curling-tongs are cold!—five bells is gone this quarter of an hour, and the roll has beat for the servants. Well done, Murray, clap your legs well through the breeches: now then for the shoes! Why, you look like an admiral!—are you any relation to Lord Howe! That's well done, Strop; you have made his head for all the world like an overgrown cauliflower;—that will do: Mr. Murray will call at your shop and pay you to-morrow; you live in Tier-street, No. 20, I believe;—we won't forget. Now then for your waistcoat;—that's beautiful! Your coat?"

"I have got no coat—I have only got a *coatee*."

"Well, on with that. There now—pull your ruffles down. Here's your sword:—why, it's long enough to toast cheese at the galley-fire without burning your fingers. And as a topper over all, here's your three-cornered scraper: you must carry that under your arm.—Let's see," continued

Weazel, talking to allow the time to creep on:—"Mind how you behave at dinner! I know you are a man of high family; but it's not every man who dines with kings. You must never answer the captain—only bow, and whatever he offers you must take.—How do you feel in your full dress?"

"Why, I feel very much like a fool," said Murray; "and all I want to make myself more ridiculous is a large nosegay, and then I should be as much like one of the gilded donkeys which dance round a jack-in-the-green on May-day as needs be."

"I forgot the nosegay, Murray, or we might have got one from the captain's garden in the mizen-top.—There's *The Roast Beef*! Now run into the cabin, and never mind the men looking at you;—go right in, for sometimes the midshipmen turn out to see how a new comer looks in full uniform. Now then, skim up the after-hatchway, and mind what I told you."

Murray, who had witnessed the great respect paid by the first lieutenant, of whom he stood in considerable awe, to the captain, and had seen with his own eyes how all bowed to the king afloat, had never allowed it to enter his mind that a boy like himself could be too absurdly dressed; and few can imagine who have not themselves seen, how very ridiculous any one looks in knee-breeches and buckles, and with a short coat. He bustled up the after-hatchway, and never heeded the shout of laughter by which he was assailed. The sentinel opened the door with a wonderful grin upon his countenance, and Mr. Murray stood in the fore-cabin, the captain being in the after one waiting for his guests. Hammerton was likewise invited, and was at that time inquiring for Murray when Weazel said in the most innocent manner, "I believe he is gone up—I think I saw him go up the after-hatchway just now."

"Did you tell him," said Hammerton, "to wait for the first lieutenant?"

"No," said Weazel; "I think he is too great a nob to wait for any one; but I suppose he will smooth down like the rest of us. It's quite astonishing," said the young mid, "how being elevated high above the quarter-deck makes a man wish for a more lowly situation. There goes the first lieutenant."

Hammerton followed his senior officer, taking it for grant-

ed that Murray had gone before, and arrived at the fore-cabin just as the captain opened his door, and beheld the unfortunate victim of Weazel's malice, his first lieutenant and Hammerton, all at the same moment. He immediately, although he could not entirely command his countenance—turned his eye towards Hammerton in order to ask how this could be, and he privy to it. Hammerton, seeing his protégé dressed in so ludicrous a style, could not restrain his laughter, or conceal his mortification: he merely said, "I assure you, sir, I know nothing whatever of this foolish business." The first lieutenant gave a look of reproach at the three servants, who very soon saw it was possible to laugh the wrong side of a face; and the captain, with that kindness which marked him through life, taking no notice whatever of Hammerton's remark, said, "Sit here, Mr. Murray," placing him on his right hand.

Murray knew something was wrong; for he was quick enough to perceive the almost suppressed titter, and to remark that Hammerton and the first lieutenant neither had powdered heads nor knee-breeches. The captain's manner soon overcame his first shyness, and Murray began to feel more at ease; although, whenever he caught the eye of any present, he saw the broad grin that was over the countenance. By degrees the captain wormed out of Murray the author of the trick, and the manner in which it had been carried on: nor could they exactly blame Weazel, for the joke was well conceived and happily executed; the manner in which it had been conducted—the privacy of the boat-swain's cabin so as to keep others out of the secret, was a happy thought; but the simultaneous roar, which even the captain's presence could not control, and in which he joined, when Murray said that the hair-dresser lived at No. 20, Tier-street, and that Mr. Scales had provided him with the hair-powder, opened Murray's eyes to the tricks which had been played him.

CHAPTER VII.

Night at Sea.—A squall.—A Schooner upset, and the consequences.

THE captain was really not sorry for the trick played upon his young midshipman: he knew his character well, and foresaw that the laugh this would occasion, would humble the pride of the boy, and perhaps ultimately do him more real service than Murray himself was aware of. Hammer-ton knew that the play was only begun, and that Mr. Weazel would certainly be kind enough to have a full attendance of midshipmen and men to welcome the young courtier when he came out of the cabin, that minute being pretty well known. But here he was overreached by the captain, who, when the first lieutenant retired, took Murray into his after-cabin, told him the trick which had been played upon him, and recommended him to take no notice whatever of it, but to run below and change his dress, when the hands were turned up—"reef topsails;" and thus frustrated Mr. Weazel's kind intentions. The first lieutenant reported all present and sober at quarters; the order was given for the signal to be hoisted for the convoy to close round the commodore, and to take one reef in the topsails.

"And now," said the captain, as he heard the men rush up the ladders when the boatswain turned the hands up, "do you run below, and be quick: beat that flour out of your head, put on the clothes you wore this morning, and join in the laugh against yourself."

Down dived Mr. Murray; but he soon found that Weazel never slept over fun. The captain's kindness was almost frustrated by the boy; he was resolved to have a good laugh even if it finished in a good thrashing, and he took care to stow away Murray's dress. This, however, was soon remedied; and as Weazel was desired to remain at the mizen-topmast-head to count the convoy, although they were close

alongside the frigate, he had not the satisfaction of seeing the consummation of his plan; and one hour before he was called down from his elevation, Murray was rigged according to orders, and was busy in making himself a sailor.

The night was nearly calm; the frigate, under easy sail, crept silently through the water at the rate of a knot and a half, and the convoy as silently followed the commodore. No sea ran to sicken Murray with his new profession—the stars were forth, and the moon shone beautifully on the smooth water. In such moments there are thoughts which steal over us and win us from ourselves; and those who have braved longest the perils of a sailor's life, feel most exquisitely the glory of the calm night, when the stars are reflected in the vast deep, and when the sea takes "the moods, and wears the colours of her mistress—the sky." He who first perils his existence on this mighty and immense mass of waters,—for as Campbell says,

"The eagle's vision cannot take it in;
The lightning's wing, too weak to sweep its space,
Sinks half-way o'er it like a wearied bird;—"

experiences a solemn feeling of awe,—of wonder, nay, oftentimes of fear. And yet, lost in the very magnificence of this image of eternity—this throne of the Invisible, man feels himself a prouder being, in the knowledge that the science of his fellow-creatures has taught him to explore its wondrous depths,—to steer uninjured by rocks or islands through its pathless desert, and to draw a higher and a better notion of the glory and divinity of his Maker by the never-ending wonders which are presented to him. The poor in pocket and in mind, condemned from youth to age to toil, perhaps in the darkness of a mine, excavating the ore, and returning when oppressed with fatigue to the shed which serves him for shelter; the mechanic, who from daylight to dark continues his labour in one city; the husbandman, who ploughs the field and sows the seed, who reaps the harvest and who stacks the hay,—can never have that exalted notion of man, and of man's works, as he whose whole life is one scene of continued change; who is associated to-day with the dark, sulky negro of the Gold Coast—with the gay Frenchman to-morrow; who sees the pigmy race of Mexico or the giants of Patagonia,—much less can he form a just estimate of the

power of the Divinity. The wonders of creation are to be seen in the ocean, and in the stupendous mountains of the Andes, or the still prouder Himalayas. It is in sights like these that man is convinced of his own insignificance, and yet of his own power: it is when standing on the Andes, and seeing a city like a speck, that he feels his vast inferiority. But he becomes conscious of the greatness of his intellect when he measures the heights above him with mathematical exactness, or looks for the moment,—the well-calculated moment; when a comet shall return and be visible. Oh! the delight—the calm delight of pondering on such sublimity, supported by the still ocean! when the mind, in harmony with the scene, calmly surveys the greatness of the works of God.

The Tribune was a thirty-six gun frigate,—a small, compact, trim vessel. Her commander was a man of sterling worth and tried experience; and he was on the present occasion intrusted with the protection of a valuable convoy, bound, some to Quebec, and others to Newfoundland. Her orders were comprised in a few words,—“to see the convoy safe to its destination, and to await further orders from the admiral in Halifax.”

There is no service so much detested by active officers in command of frigates, as that of counting every night and morning a certain number of merchant vessels in which they have no personal interest. The vigilance required is excessive: the drudgery of eternal signals to the slower sailers—the constant reproof to the inattentive masters, who, directly darkness allows an opportunity, edge away to make a run, not liking to be detained by their heavier companions, and anxious to avail themselves of the first of the market to which they are consigned—are everlasting. The fore-castle gun is always in requisition, and the flags for the convoy to make more sail might always be kept bent and ready for hoisting. In war—and convoy frigates are useless except during a war—that which is the constant wish and thought of all must be relinquished. No suspicious sail must entice the frigate from her convoy: the sneaking schooner, edging perhaps towards the vessel farthest from the commodore, may be chased, but not pursued; she may be scared away—not followed: and even the rich Batavia-man—the ship nearly sinking with wealth, must pass without obstruction, if in seeking her detention the convoy are likely to be run out of

sight. Talk of patience! place a keen cruiser of a captain in a fast frigate with a slow convoy, and if he keeps his temper more than twenty-four hours, he will die of the effort the minute afterwards.

Murray from day to day grew in seamanship; he liked it wonderfully. It is true his never-sleeping annoyer had played him another trick by sending him to Mr. Scales to buy a quadrant. Mr. Scales had none in his shop, but recommended him to Ropeyarn, the boatswain's yeoman, who was unfortunately out of the article, but believed that the gentleman could be supplied by Mr. Chips, who kept a large carpenter's store and shop near the fore-hold. Again, however, was he to be disappointed: Mr. Chips had sold his last to Mr. Weazel, but knew that Mr. Handspike next door retained one. This, however, could not be sold without the consent of the captain of the fore-top, Daniel Munroe, who was to be found in his house, of which his rank was the name, or in the garden which surrounded the huge *agave americana* which grew from its centre. To mount the fore-rigging was no easy undertaking, but Murray persevered; and as he nearly reached the abode of the gentleman to whom he was despatched, he found himself lashed to the rigging, only to be released on the payment of a certain sum, which was to entitle him to free ingress and egress to and from the above-named garden, and give him the right of plucking and eating any fruit he might find therein. The first step made aloft soon prompted Murray, under the encouragement of Hammerton, to use his best endeavours to reach the mast-head. The difficulty once overcome, was succeeded by the pleasurable sensation of surmounting a difficulty and of getting forward in the service;—nay, in spite of all the tricks of the youngsters, the hardship of the life, the discomforts to which the spoilt boy was subjected, he grew fonder and fonder of the service, and before the first breeze and sea-sickness were over, he had laughed at the prejudices of his youth, and was always to be seen where the greatest danger was to be encountered.

Boys of this stamp however much addicted to pecuniary meanness, always do well on board a ship: they soon get the rough husk rubbed off, and by associating with lads of spirit and enterprise, partake a little of their companions' feelings, and soon become well disposed towards each other, and often establish friendships which last through life. There was one

person, however, who, kind and obliging as he was, Murray hated: this was Hammerton. The feeling was engendered when he struck him, and became rooted in his mind when he heard himself placed under his control;—nay, the very patronising manner which Murray imagined to be practised by Hammerton when he interfered to stop a quarrel, or to thrust himself into it in order to keep Murray out of it was wormwood to the proud boy, who considered this officious intermeddler as a man supported by his father, and whose family might be reduced to beggary at the whim or caprice of Sir Hector.

Murray controlled his feelings; but the hatred increased—the blow was never to be forgotten; and although others of the oldsters pulled his ears or slapped his face, the injury was forgotten when the pain was over: but towards Hammerton he had quite a different feeling. Time, instead of obliterating, only strengthened his hatred;—kindness, instead of soothing this unfortunate disgust, only rendered it more lasting, and rooted it more deeply. Hammerton perceived it through the disguise by which Murray attempted to conceal it; and not feeling any animosity against Murray, and being well aware that Sir Hector was his best friend,—for from him alone had he any hopes of advancement, whilst his father, mother, and sisters subsisted upon the bounty of the baronet,—he would not allow himself to be deterred in his endeavours to teach Murray his duty, or slacken his kindness even when that kindness was refused. Murray was in Hammerton's watch. If it rained, Hammerton would ask the lieutenant to allow Murray to go below; but the latter, with determined spite, would rather stand on the lee gangway, and catch every drop which fell from the mainsail, than go below. If the officer of the watch was solicited, and gave him a hint to be off, he was in his hammock a minute afterwards. Such was his dislike to Hammerton, that he would sacrifice personal comfort even when the favour granted was one which was commonly accorded to every youngster in the ship, rather than accept it from him who was in reality his truest friend. Such are the contradictions of human nature, that in many cases we would rather receive the poisoned cup from an enemy, than the most delicious nectar from our friend: it is a blindness of heart from which we may well earnestly desire to be delivered.

The Tribune had now been about a fortnight at sea, when

the morning of the 2d of November dawned upon her.—During these fifteen days the convoy had nearly reached the Western Islands. Murray had overcome all disposition to sea sickness, and was as much of a sailor as his short apprenticeship would allow. The clouds which at daylight began to rise suddenly from the north-west soon banked up heavily to leeward. At this time the wind was in the south-east quarter, and the convoy were going nearly before the wind; the frigate, under her topsails and foresail, making and shortening sail occasionally to keep close to her convoy. About seven o'clock the officer of the watch apprised Captain Barker that the wind showed every disposition to shift—that the scud aloft was going at a very considerable rate towards the south-east, and that a heavy squall was brewing ahead. The signal was instantly made for the convoy to shorten sail. The foresail of the Tribune was hauled up and a reef taken in the topsails. Every preparation was made for the coming squall, and finally the ship was brought to the wind and hove-to. Several of the sternmost ships—for in spite of the vigilance and attention of the different officers of the watches, the convoy was much separated and many ships far astern—disregarded the signal, and still kept their studding sails set in order to close the commodore.—Some who must have seen the approaching breeze waited until it should arrive before they set seriously to work to reef their top-sails; thus giving their crews about eight times the labour they otherwise would have had, and ultimately paying severely for their want of attention and discretion. About nine it fell a dead calm. In the south-east the sky was clear and cloudless; whilst in the opposite direction, dark, heavy purple masses rolled over each other, more unnatural in appearance owing to a lighter cloud covering the curling fluid as if with a veil. Shooting from this dark heap of clouds, some few were separated, and rose to a higher region of the air, in which they were dissipated and blown out like mares' tails, passing rapidly over the convoy: whilst on the water, and about a mile from the ships, the sea appeared as if covered with a thick white haze, before which seemed a dark line of black. As this was evidently no common squall, the hands were turned up, the topsails lowered and made as secure as possible, the yards were squared, the jib hauled down, and the fore-topmast staysail set,—the Tribune lying at this time with her starboard broadside to

the approaching storm. Murray had never seen a sight like this; and much as he had read in books of fiction, of waves rolling, mountains high—of storms, of dangers, of perils encountered by seamen, yet he was by no means prepared for the silent approach of the enemy. There was evidently much apprehension on the countenances of several of the old seaman, and the first lieutenant was overheard to say that he was apprehensive the convoy were too close together, fearing that if a thick haze came on with the squall many ships would run on board of each other. It was in vain now to attempt to remedy this oversight: it was a calm with the squall coming gradually up as if to burst upon them; and from the manner in which the dark cloud had blown over them—the immense rapidity with which it swept aloft, it was most evident that it would be a serious storm.

About half-past nine it burst upon the ships, and no pen can describe—no words give the most faint outline of the tremendous force with which it assailed the convoy. The Tribune, although so well prepared, suffered much; her main-topsail was shaken to ribands, the fore-topmast staysail disappeared in a moment, and the fore-top-gallant mast was carried away; the ship heeled over to port and lay like a wreck upon the waters. Her loss, however, was trifling, compared to that suffered by those around her.

There was in the convoy a smart-looking schooner,—a vessel always in her station, and one frequently sent astern to whip up the idle and inattentive. This schooner was the Jane. Before the squall burst, her commander tried all in his power to creep a little ahead of the frigate in order to avoid falling on board of her: indeed, so close was she that she had been hailed to that effect by Captain Barker. When the first effect, which was momentary, had passed off, the schooner was seen close to the Tribune on her beam-ends and sinking. A cry louder than the wind reached the frigate, and the echo of "The schooner is upset!" was repeated fore and aft the frigate. Instantly some daring hands leaped into the small cutter on the larboard quarter. Ham-merton was seen casting off the after stopper; whilst, in the bow of the boat, Weazel, who was quite a boy, was observed using his utmost efforts to cast off the foremost stopper.—Four or five men had got into the cutter, some casting off the gripes, others getting the stretchers clear to fend her off from the ship's side; and at this busy moment it was in vain

that the master, a good seaman, declared that it was inevitable ruin to lower the boat—that she would be blown away to leeward and be of no service whatever: his voice was lost amidst the whistling hiss of the wind, as it surged through the rigging. At this moment Murray had got upon the hammocks and scrambled outside the mizen rigging, intending to reach the boat, unequal as he was to cope with such danger; for a fortnight's apprenticeship in light breezes will not enable a seaman to dare every peril in a gale. He still persevered; but at the moment when he reached over to touch the gunwale of the boat in order to throw himself into her, where he would have been useless, the gripes were cut off, and owing to the laying over of the frigate the boat immediately swung away from the chains, and Murray dropped overboard between the space.

On occasions like these there are hundreds to give assistance, and all ready to bear witness of exertions either successfully or fruitlessly made. The deep-sea lead line, which had been kept on the reel, was hanging in its beackets under the cleat of the larboard main-brace. The end was thrown into the cutter by Mr. Clubb, the master, before Murray fell overboard, and it was in Hammerton's hand when he saw the accident. The stopper was off; but owing to some confusion in the coil of the boat's fall, they would not lower her; or perhaps the man at the foremost fall had perceived that Weazel was not so quick, not being so strong as his messmate; and whilst another hand stronger than the youngster's took his place, Weazel was bundled very unceremoniously on board again. He had beckoned, for it was useless calling, to the man at the after fall to hold on. There was not a minute's time—nay, nor half a minute's in the performance of a duty which it takes much time to describe. Hammerton, finding his order to "lower away" was unheeded, if not unheard, grasped the lead-line firmly and was overboard in a second. Murray could swim a little; but the ship was drifting to leeward fast, and he was under the larboard counter, when Hammerton caught hold of him, and passing the rope under his arms, made it fast. Strange as it may seem, Murray actually tried to disengage himself from the rope; and even in that struggle, when his life was far from secure, he actually shook off the hold of Hammerton, and saw the brave fellow, who had risked his own life to save his, drift round the stern, without once stretching out his hand to proffer

assistance. Murray was saved: a bowline knot was passed down by the lead-line, which fell over his shoulders, and he was hauled on board; but such was his hatred of Hammerton, that he never even inquired if he was saved, or spoke one word of encouragement to others, who more ready and willing than himself, would have thrown a grating or an oar to save their favourite. The boat was now in the water; but all efforts were ineffectual to keep her head to wind: the spray blown from the ocean covered her as a tropical rain, and it was hard to say, if by the means attempted to rescue the men belonging to the Jane, the Tribune had not wilfully sacrificed her own. Hammerton was now far away on the weather quarter, evidently getting much exhausted; for the spray was so heavy, that if he had attempted to swim head to wind, he must have been drowned. The boat's crew, regardless of the distance, which now became great, still plied their oars and bent their backs to save Hammerton; the schooner being in the same direction, but a little to windward of him. She of course did not drift so fast to leeward as the frigate; and the last time either boat or Hammerton were seen, the one was pulling in a right line to save the other. Murray had watched the exertion with intense interest, nor did he turn away from the last gaze of the man he hated until the increased distance and the thickness of spray hid him from his sight.

The different ships of the convoy were much injured: more than four fell foul of each other; but the squall came on so fast, that one dismasted, and another with a signal of distress flying, were the only two which were observed on board the Tribune. Vain and useless were it to attempt to depict the scene. In vain was the shriek for assistance uttered, the uplifted hand of terror as a signal;—in vain did those who still clung to the wreck of the Jane scream to those who risked their lives to save them, in vain was the eager supplication to Heaven—the hasty repetition of the too long neglected prayer! And, oh! the bitter moment of memory, when even Hope withdrew her last light, and the Jane and her crew were immersed below the water! There sunk the father, the husband, the friend, the brave seaman—the beloved of many! and no imaginary tablet can be upraised amidst the rolling waves to point the grave of that gallant crew! When the sun dawned on that morning, and whilst the crew were engaged in the usual avocations of the seaman's life, little did they, in the full vigour of health, ima-

gine that before the noonday sun should shine to guide the vessel on the pathless deep, that vessel should be a wreck ! her sails scattered, her hull sunk, themselves drowned !—cut off in a moment when danger was unthought of and preparation deemed useless.

The crew of the cutter saw the schooner disappear. Ham-merton, for the minute, had been rescued from the danger which assailed him ; but his situation in the boat was apparently a mere prolongation of very uncertain existence,—for when he recovered himself from the giddy effect of unusual exertion, no ship could be discovered as a welcome home to the wearied crew—not a speck on the now contracted horizon could point a way for escape. Although the gallant fellows still plied their oars and kept the boat's head towards the part where they imagined their frigate to be, yet gradually they grew weary of the ineffectual labour, boated their oars, and looked at each other with despairing countenances.

On board the *Tribune* all was exertion to recover the boat. The fury of the first squall being past, it was now possible to carry a little sail ; but, owing to the fog which had thickened with the squall, all was uncertainty as to what was best to be done. To wear and make sail might be to cross the boat, pulling in an opposite direction, besides the fear of running on board some of the convoy. It was useless to continue firing guns : the wind was so high that the noise of the explosion scarcely reached the taffrail, and it was evident that one hundred yards astern the sound could never reach. In the mean time, the sea had begun to run, and the danger grew more imminent. After a consultation with the first lieutenant and the master, it was resolved to keep the frigate as near her present position as possible, and if in half an hour's time no appearance of the boat became visible, to wear under a close-reefed main-topsail and foresail, and endeavour to preserve not an improbable distance from the scene of the calamity. This was no time for inactivity ; the sails were reefed, and not an order was given without being followed by the continued disheartening question of " Can you see the boat ? " Men were stationed in every part of the ship ; but those aloft could not see so far as those on deck. The captain strained his eyes ; glasses were used, and as quickly laid aside. The guns were still fired, however ; the whole crew were on the alert. There was but one person below—it was Murray.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sir Hector Murray's visit to old Hammerton.—A melancholy Tale.

NEAR one of the prettiest towns in England, Taunton in Somersetshire, there *was*—for Time has not spared it—a neat white cottage. It stood near the high road, almost opposite to a splendid lodge which was the entrance to the estate of Sir Hector Murray. On one side was all the economical neatness of good taste reduced to circumscribed limits; on the other, all the display of riches. The small, neatly-gravelled pathway to the cottage was but the ghost of the broad road which led to the mansion of Sir Hector: still, however, the nicely trained plants which grew in great luxuriance on the fertile ground gave rather an elegant appearance to the smaller abode, and comfort was evidently to be found where riches could not command it. The leaves were now falling before the last of the autumnal gales; the blossoms had long since forsaken the plants; the azalia, which brightened in summer and spread its thick yellow blossoms, was now a leafless shrub; the gaudy peony, whose thick, deep flower had beautified the little gardens cut with scrupulous exactness from a small grass plat dignified as a lawn, was divested of its summer grandeur; the lively lilac, the golden showery laburnum, and all those millions of Nature's fairest ornaments, were fast assuming the cold deadness of winter; and even Somersetshire wore a certain periodical dulness which three months previously had been unknown.

It is strange, that at the season of the year when Nature puts on her richest dress as if to entice the intelligent and the curious to examine her, many human beings seem to shun the beauties which a bountiful Providence has spread over the land, and congregate in cities, to revel in crowded assemblies; but when, as if to warn man that he should seek

the companionship of his own fellow-mortals, the earth is covered with snow, or when the wintry showers descend in such torrents that exercise is debarred,—then, instead of seeking the warm cheerfulness of society, and enjoying the luxury which is concentrated in large communities, as if in contradiction to the law of Nature, the towns are deserted, and the country swarms with the tide of human beings.

This is neither the first nor the hundredth time that a similar remark has been made; and on this subject, without derogating much from the stubborn opposition which characterises the English people, they might borrow a little wisdom from their long-hated neighbours the French. With us legislators pant with oppressive heat, instead of deliberating coolly on the measure before them; and the best effort of eloquence falls dully upon the ear when oppressive heat relaxes the body and unstrings the mind.

It was about noon, as we have said, towards the close of autumn, that an old gentleman, dressed in deep mourning, and with a countenance manifesting wo and heaviness of heart, stood leaning over the cottage-gate, looking at a travelling-carriage which was approaching, and which stopped while the great gates of Sir Hector's estate opened to receive their master. Sir Hector, who saw old Mr. Hammerton, made him a bow of recognition, which was answered with much form by the old gentleman. As he lifted his hat, the long gray hairs, thin enough to be moved by any breeze, fell upon his shoulders; and a finer specimen of beneficence and benevolence never brightened the human countenance more than in the features of Mr. Hammerton.

Struck by the unusual figure before him, Sir Hector desired his servant to open the carriage-door; and descending with a proper slow and stately step, he bade his servants take the carriage home whilst he crossed the road; and extending his hand with much cordiality, he began, "It is many years, Mr. Hammerton, since I have had the pleasure of seeing you: I trust your health continues unimpaired, and that your wife and family are well."

Sir Hector paused for a reply, and was much disconcerted when he saw the old gentleman turn away and commence beating with his stick against the door. Almost immediately a beautiful little girl about ten years of age came running towards Mr. Hammerton; and after looking with an inquisitive glance, she turned to Sir Hector and said,

"Papa, sir, is quite deaf: *I* can make him understand if you mention to me what you desire."

Sir Hector repeated his former question; the child by her fingers and signs made the old gentleman understand, and he answered—for he was not dumb—that he believed it was now twenty years since he had *seen* Sir Hector,—he therefore apologised for not having recognised him at first, but now gladly seized the opportunity of expressing his sincere thanks for the many kind and liberal proofs of friendship he had given him. Here he was interrupted by the baronet, who took the old man's hand and pressed it warmly in his own. The little girl stood interpreter to the following conversation:

"I have," said Sir Hector, "renewed our acquaintance, Mr. Hammerton, in order, if possible, to convince you that, notwithstanding the little bickerings and acrimonious feeling which separated us, and which I am willing to believe originated in myself, the good wishes of my heart were ever warm towards you. Your son is on board the same ship as my son; and I have placed Walter under the direction of your Frederic, thus bringing them together, in the hope that a permanent friendship may exist; and further, that, should I be suddenly cut off, this cottage and these grounds may be your undisturbed possession; for I hear you have grown to this spot, and regard it with more than common affection."

"When I was in distress, Sir Hector," answered the old man, "you stepped forward: when greedy creditors would neither allow me time to repair the mischief nor even give me a place in which to lay my head, you came forward and lent me this: when my wife,"—and here the old man became much affected,—"*who now is an angel in heaven*,—brought me this dear little child into the world, your liberality supplied her with medical advice, and the dainties which affluence only can afford. From the first moment of my entering this abode—now sacred to me, since it is but a month since she who had contributed to my happiness and bore without a murmur the increased infirmities and troubles of life, was taken from me,—you, although you concealed the donation, have regularly remitted me one hundred pounds a year. I was a stranger to you—had no tie, no relationship, no claim upon you; I was relieved by you, when even my own family turned their backs upon

me. Can you be surprised then that I should desire to end my days in this abode? I would be a beggar for that favour; and when I am gone, Frederic must be a father and protector to this dear little child; and may the God of mercy shield her from the sufferings her parents have experienced!"

"Fear not for her, my old friend, nor for your son: if I live, he shall be advanced in the service and placed beyond the chance of want; he who is now a guide to my son shall not find me unmindful of his services, and I will this evening add a codicil to my will, leaving in it an earnest request to my son that you and your family shall never be disturbed in this dwelling. You know they both have sailed—their destination is to Halifax."

"I know it," replied Mr. Hammerton, "for Frederic has written twice since he sailed. I suppose your son has not omitted to avail himself of the same opportunities?"

"I have not heard," replied Sir Hector, "since the day they sailed;" and here the mortification of Sir Hector was visible.

"I dare say," interrupted Mr. Hammerton, "that the poor fellow was sea-sick; but of this you may rest assured, that he was going on well in his profession: my son particularly mentions that he was active and intelligent, and very careful to all that he desired. Besides, sir, when a youngster first enters the service, he generally has so much to do in his own ideas that some excuse will readily be made for him."

"How old are you, my pretty little girl?" asked Sir Hector, willing to change a conversation which did not exalt his son in his estimation.

"I am just ten, sir," replied the little dark-eyed beauty.

"Just ten?" replied the baronet: "does that mean you are past ten, or nearly ten?"

"I shall be ten on the 2d of November," lisped Amelia.

"I shall not forget your birth-day, I dare say," said the baronet as he took a book from his pocket and made a memorandum: "we shall be better friends and neighbours, I trust, for the future. And now, Mr. Hammerton, you must walk over with little Amelia and dine with me. I am a poor lone trunk now; the prop which might have supported me has left me, and I find that wealth and large estates do not necessarily give either comfort or happiness; for

although I confess it is selfish to say so, I would relinquish nearly all to have my son near me to the end of my life. It is true I walk through large halls and splendid rooms; but the voice of my child is wanting; and you, Mr. Hammerton, have twice the satisfaction in life, by having by your side one who must love and respect you, and whose little winning and affectionate look would chase away any gloom. But I must get out of this moody manner, and I doubt not your kindness will bestow a few moments on a man who has long respected you."

"I should be ungrateful, Sir Hector, if I did not acknowledge at all times your kindness to me."

"Then let me beg of you to acknowledge it by your silence upon that subject. Come, my little interpreter;—why, your fingers and your eyes would make any man understand a speech in parliament. Take my arm, Mr. Hammerton: I think I am strongest upon my legs, although the gout every now and then does all the mischief in its power, and whilst it makes them thicker makes them weaker. How long has your son been at sea, Mr. Hammerton?"

"Five years," replied the old gentleman; "and during that time I have only seen him once. He has seen some service: he was in Howe's action, and escaped untouched. I put him with Barker, because that kind man, whom I knew under different circumstances, did not forget a former kindness and was anxious to requite it."

"If, Mr. Hammerton, the subject is not too painful to you, let me ask you how you became deaf? for when I knew you before, you heard as well as any man, and your age is not sufficient, without some sickness or some great nervous excitement, to have caused this infirmity."

"It is a melancholy tale, but it is soon told, Sir Hector. I had another son;—you may remember him, for he was alive when I last saw you. His name was Charles, and he was my eldest boy. During the period of my affluence, I had not withheld the benefits of education from him, and I saw the seeds of a refined mind gradually developing themselves in him. He was studious; I intended him for the church, in which I had some little interest; and looked forward with some hope that one day my son would become a distinguished minister of peace. I often pictured to myself the pleasure I should experience in hearing the congregation as they crowded through the porch of the church

express their admiration of the discourse, and from the poorer classes hear my son called as good as he was wise. His early habits of charity—his ceaseless regard for the poor—his solicitude for the sick—his mildness—his benevolence—all qualified him for the sacred profession he himself had chosen, and which should never be ventured on by the thoughtless lover of pleasure. I own to you, Sir Hector, I have a sovereign contempt for your sporting parson,—a man who crams his horse at a fence to keep pace with yelping dogs which run the faster the nearer they are to a death: nor can I think it consistent with the character of a minister of Christianity—one who should spare, not slay—to occupy his mornings in shooting. When the winter with all its rigour cramps the aged and the infirm, it is little consistent with the character of a minister of God to gallop over fields and waste his time in pursuing a poor and hunted creature; rather should he then be striving to warm the hearts of his parishioners."

"Surely," said Sir Hector, "you would not debar the clergyman from all recreation?"

"Assuredly not. There is a recreation for the mind in the solacing of others. I would not have him a weed to choke the exertions of the flowers around him, or by too much austerity rebuke the innocent gayeties of others. Those who think it a sin to smile on the Sabbath, I hold to be fanatics. Could we find one amongst all the fanatical preachers who would lie down for years upon a bed of spikes for the love of God? I have always remarked that your over-pious person has generally been the greatest sinner; and as a racket-ball rebounds the farthest the harder it is propelled, so the reaction is the greater in proportion to the extent of crime. No man has a greater regard for the proper performance of religious duties than I have—no one a more thorough contempt for those who arrogate to themselves a superiority from the nonsensical belief in an inward light, or who proudly, impiously,—nay, blasphemously, sit in judgment upon others, and denounce them as the children of Satan—the infants of the devil."

"I confess myself much of your opinion, Mr. Hammer-ton," remarked Sir Hector; "and I think the parents who allow their children to enter the church, knowing that from their manner of life they are unfit to uphold its sacred character, are more to blame than the eager young man who is

anxious to hear his own voice in public and to read his own production to his attentive congregation.—But you have been led from your subject in your zeal for the church.”

“True, Sir Hector,—apparently so; but, in reality, it was done on purpose to save myself the repetition of anguish. You have a right to know all, however, which concerns myself; and as I am now somewhat prepared for the task, you must bear the infliction of its recital.

“My son was about eighteen, as handsome as ever a mother could wish; and, as if preparing himself for the honourable profession he had chosen, he had relinquished all the sportsman’s pursuits, and would for hours walk in the fields studying. Frequently, such was the enthusiasm of his mind, when darkness stopped his studies, he would find himself far from home. The poor all knew him, and knew his circumstances. At that time I had very little to give him; but the little I could spare he gave to others more in want of it than himself. The blessings of the poor followed his steps, and his security was in the affections of all around him.

“It was in December 1780 that we heard of a family, about ten miles distant, which had been swept away, with the exception of the widow, by that fearful disease the small-pox. My children all had it when young, excepting Charles; and although many of the gentlemen in the neighbourhood sent money, as I know you did, Sir Hector, yet few would venture within the poisoned walls of the wretched and lonely widow. Charles, when he heard of it, instantly prepared for his long walk; and although his mother and myself warned him of the danger he ran, yet he was resolved to see the poor woman, and to return home to get whatever she most required. He promised us not to go into the house, and he kept his word. The old woman received the small pittance we were able to collect for her, and with outstretched hands to Heaven she prayed that he who thus relieved the miserable, might never want the protecting arm of God in any adversity! Vain prayer unheeded! Who dares to direct the will of the Omnipotent? His ways are inscrutable! Who can avert the evil when the hour is arrived? My boy’s goodness led to his death. That evening he returned home in high spirits at having gained his point. Finding the poor woman in much distress, he had taken a circuitous route to regain his home; had called on several gentleman, and by

his warmth and eloquence,—for in England the ears of the affluent are seldom closed against the tale of misery,—he had obtained from one some wine, from another some medicine, from a third money. Tired and jaded as he was, he could not restrain the generous feelings which animated him. He proposed—it was then eight o'clock—to rest a little, and to return that night. Against this I interposed my authority; for the snow fell fast, and drifted so as to conceal the path, and it was not a time for a solitary boy to venture on a walk of ten miles. But the next morning, although the severity of winter was at its height, he started at the first dawn of day, delivered the comforts he had gathered, promised a visit on the following day, and returned home.—The third day the rain fell so fast that I kept him from his wishes. That very restraint, the offspring of parental affection, blighted all my hopes. By three in the afternoon the storm subsided: Charles was instantly on the alert. From that moment to this all is conjecture. He reached the poor woman's cottage,—that we have ascertained, and that he proceeded on his return home. We hardly expected him before ten o'clock, and all the little comforts we could command were in preparation for our son. Well I remember the shoes which were placed before the fire, and the change of linen; all that a mother's care could suggest to render her son happy—all that could show an anxious parent's love of her child was then displayed. The swift hand of time!—for time never lingers when anxiety commences—when an object is expected and yet comes not to the moment. Eleven o'clock, and no sound of the wicket-latch had preceded the footstep of my son. I told his mother to go to bed; but that order was useless. We sat in silence, only interrupted by remarking how quickly the hour flew. Midnight came on: the murmuring breeze had swelled into a gusty, riotous noise; the little rain which before feebly reached our shutters, now came with quick force upon our dwelling; and as the morning wind, the herald of misfortune, died for a moment in order to resume a greater strength, we heard the voices of men—we heard our wicket opened—we ran to open the door, which common prudence had left barred and bolted. Oh! gracious Heaven! I received my dead son, my murdered boy into my house! The knife of the assassin had nearly severed his head! his eyes seemed started from their sockets! whilst his firm hands were closed beyond

our strength to open them. I stood like a statue; I scarcely could credit the awful truth before me. I never spoke; but with eyes fixed and riveted on my Charles, I heeded not those around me. They tell me my wife's scream might have been heard above the storm: she was as close to me as you are. I never heard it—I never caught one sound of it; but lifting my eyes on those who had brought him to me, I saw their lips move, I saw the eager description of the dreadful crime; but from that hour to this I have never heard a human voice. I pray that at the great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, I may stand before my Maker with the same hope of redemption as my son—for I have a belief that he will be numbered amongst the blessed."

The poor old man, overcome by the effort he had made, fell back upon a sofa, for they had reached the room long before the painful recital began;—the little child leaned over and kissed him, and then sat upon a cushion near him, holding his hand; whilst Sir Hector felt for him as a man and consoled him as a Christian. After a pause of some moments, Sir Hector remarked that from one expression which escaped Mr. Hammerton, there was a slight allusion to the cause of this murder.

"By signs, and by having the sad account written," replied Mr. Hammerton, "I only gleaned that three labourers passing the road observed a body lying by the side of the ditch. As the weather was bitterly cold and rainy, they imagined it must either have been a man intoxicated, who had fallen down and slept in spite of the elements, or that sickness had overtaken the traveller. On lifting it, their horror may be better imagined than described, when they saw that it was a murdered man. They took it instantly to a house not far distant, and my son was recognised by a poor old man he had often relieved. No trace, no tidings of those who did this savage deed have ever been discovered: years have passed away, the crime has gone unrevengeed, and perhaps the murderers prosper. But it was so ordained; and it is not for us to arraign the decrees of Providence, rather let us bow with all submission to his will."

"Surely, Mr. Hammerton, you do not believe that it was destiny,—that it was ordained above that this murder should be committed on earth?"

"You put the question strongly, Sir Hector, and I am embarrassed how to answer. The belief that it was predestined is my only solace. If I discredited that, I should consider myself the direct cause of my son's death."

"There are few men, Mr. Hammerton, who argue this great question with coolness and with reason. Men embrace the creed readily which yields the most comfort. It is evident that if we are not left to our own guidance here, we cannot be responsible hereafter. The belief in predestination shakes to the dust the free agency of man, and renders him nothing more than a mere puppet at a show, the strings being worked by other hands. To what use shall we turn conscience? It ceases to be an inward monitor, to forewarn us of the commission of a crime, and must be considered only as a part of memory which most vividly retains the picture.—Is it not more consistent with reason to argue that certain men who existed by plunder, and who nightly prowled about for prey, met your son: they saw by his dress and manner that he was a gentleman; they imagined that money was always to be found upon such a person; they demanded it; he resisted: they, to be rid of a man who held the thread of their lives in his power, rushed upon him, and finding him powerful and likely to escape, murdered him? Is it not, I say, more consistent with reason to argue thus, than to consider that it was predestined before the formation of the world,—for you must go so far back as that,—that those men should be at a certain public-house at such a time, and leave it to a minute; that the old widow should be ill, and that your son should leave home exactly at three o'clock to relieve her? And all—what for?—why, that a murder should be committed."

"I own, Sir Hector, it does look like desperation of thought; but the belief that it was so ordained, gives me great—nay, my only comfort; for I cease to weep when I think that I could not avert it—I cease to mourn when I ought to rejoice: it is this thought which comes as a consolation in my affliction, and strengthens me now to bear up against my accumulated misfortune in the loss of my wife. How could you, Sir Hector, bear to have a child fair and lovely like that little angel—to see others catch the quick remarks she made, to see the joyful smile play over the countenances of strangers as her childish wit suggested the ready reply, and yet never to hear her—never to have heard one word she uttered? If you, like me, should stand in the

church deaf—stone deaf—and murmur your prayers in silence; if you could feel what it is to see the preacher exhorting his Christian brethren to repentance; or whilst you saw others with eager ears catching every sound, and bearing witness of the truth by the flushed cheek, the quivering lip, and not unfrequently the tearful eye;—then would you feel as I feel, a great—an only consolation in believing that my present affliction was an evil ordained which I could neither fly from nor avert.”

“I believe,” continued Sir Hector, “that great misfortunes are likely to lead to the extraordinary belief we have just argued. Yours are great, and you bear them like a man: as far as human power can alleviate them, I will alleviate yours. We must consider this question again, under other circumstances. I own, at this time, when new-fangled opinions on the awful subject are bandied at every table,—and when, I grieve to say, many learned men employ their time and their talents to undermine the belief of their neighbours, and to take from them their greatest consolation by shaking their faith,—that I feel much inclined to be, as far as my poor abilities will permit, a more than silent upholder of our church. Our neighbours the French have given us sad examples what brutes men become when they have shaken off the restraints of religion; and I, as a father, would strive to inculcate that doctrine from which I have received so much comfort. My son, Mr. Hammerton, is not exactly a Charles or a Frédéric Hammerton.

“I would to heaven, Sir Hector, he were like one or the other. In my children I have been blessed: Charles was all a father could wish, Frederic is the stay and prop of my house, and that dear little affectionate Amelia my consolation—my hope! Although Providence has afflicted me in some respects, the balance is still in my favour. But who would have riches for a disobedient boy to inherit! or what affluence could compensate for the dreadful calamity of seeing one’s own blood turning against one? Thus, Sir Hector, do I borrow consolation from the ills of others, and verify an old saying, that ‘there is something in the misfortunes of our best friends which alleviates our own.’ Your boy, like mine, will do well. Perhaps from over-indulgence—for an only child, Sir Hector, is always a little spoilt—he may be a little refractory; but the benefit of example and discipline will

soon restore him to rectitude of conduct: he must be brave to be a Murray—and to be a Murray he must be good."

"I hope," said Sir Hector with a smile, "you were predestined to be a prophet: but that boy has given me much uneasiness, and the fact of your having received two letters while I have not received one since they sailed, does not contribute to make me feel more satisfied with his conduct. Come, Mr. Hammertou, dinner waits."

CHAPTER IX.

The Boat at Sea.—A Ship in sight.—Mutiny and disappointment.

It has been said that friendships contracted early, or those formed late in life, are generally of a more lasting nature than friendship formed in the intermediate time. Sir Hector, now without his boy, experienced much pleasure in the society and conversation of Mr. Hammerton. Every morning some little comforts of life were sent to the cottage; and the quiet, gentlemanly manner in which these comforts were conveyed, rendered Mr. Hammerton less averse to accepting them, and softened his pride, if one so humbled could be proud.

The 2d of November, the day on which the Tribune experienced that heavy gale, and on which Hammerton was so miserably separated from his ship, was a day of great rejoicing at the cottage. Amelia received a handsome present from Sir Hector in the shape of a workbox; and it was whilst with childish eagerness she removed the reels for cottons that she discovered a small piece of paper, on which was written a check for one hundred pounds. Mr. Hammerton was at once aware of the delicate manner in which Sir Hector had conveyed this timely present, and the tears started from his eyes as he pressed his benefactor's hand. But Sir Hector had not stopped here: he had written a letter, dating it on Amelia's birth-day, to Frederic, directed to Halifax, in which he had inclosed fifty pounds, with a desire that if Mr. Frederic Hammerton should at any time require pecuniary assistance, he would draw for the amount upon Sir Hector Murray. In this letter he desired his affectionate remembrance to his son, mentioning that he had heard of him twice from Mr. Hammerton, but that he had not received a line from himself.

Sir Hector now resolved to remain in Somersetshire for

five or six months; and scarcely a day passed without Mr. Hammerton being an inmate for some hours at the hall.—Thus time glided on agreeably to both the old gentlemen until the middle of December.

We must now return to Frederic Hammerton and his few companions in their frail boat. When he had sufficiently recovered from the stupor occasioned by his great exertions in maintaining himself above water, Hammerton became much alarmed for the situation of those who had thus generously risked their lives to save his own. He was the only officer in the boat; for Weazel, who was ever ready for any dangerous enterprise, as well as for any practical joke, had been called out of the boat before she was lowered;—in fact, he rather delayed than expedited the movement, for his strength was unequal to the casting off the stopper; but his generous disposition had been shown, and was not overlooked by either his officers or messmates.

No sooner had Hammerton surveyed the danger by which he was surrounded, than he took the command with as much coolness as if he had been sailing up Portsmouth harbour. He was sensible that he was rescued from one peril only to face a greater.

The different ships of the convoy, finding they had made but bad work of shortening sail, bore up before the squall, and were soon far, far distant from the boat. The frigate wore at the appointed time, and crossed the boat out of sight; and when, towards evening, as the sun was going down, the haze cleared off and the wind abated, not a speck was to be seen in any direction. The cutter of the Tribune with six men and Hammerton, all hungry, faint, exhausted, with two breakers of water, but no provisions of any kind, was alone on the wide waters.

The setting sun, which blazed in all its glory before it sank below the western horizon, was the first object which recalled to Hammerton's mind that the boat was standing to the southward—or rather, that her head was in that direction; for Hammerton had considered it the best plan to keep only one oar at work to leeward, in order to keep the cutter's bow to the sea, and with this view had made the other men take spell and spell about; his object, like that of the captain, being to remain as near his first situation as possible. To look for the frigate was hopeless; and as the wind had so far mode-

rated as to allow him to carry sail, he put her head towards the north-east, stepped the mast, and set the close-reefed sail.

Here at once is an instance of the prudence of first lieutenants in well-disciplined ships: the oars, mast and sails of the boat had been lashed amidships in her. Fortunately that which is often done—the removing the masts and sails out of the quarter-boats in order to lighten the weight upon the davits,—was no plan on board the Tribune. Captain Barker always kept every boat ready for service, and the two breakers of water now in her proved how necessary such precautions were: many lives have been sacrificed in the navy from covering the boats on the quarter, and many are imprudent enough to remove the masts and sails.

This was a trying situation to one so young as Hammerton; and it was when the sun's upper rim was but for a moment visible before it sank below the horizon, that Hammerton's busy memory recalled to him that this unfortunate day was the birthday of his only sister Amelia. Little did Sir Hector think and Mr. Hammerton know, when they drank Frederic's health after dinner, and when his father added, "May God bless and prosper him!" how necessary were their prayers. Little did they think he was then sitting half-drowned in a lonely boat with six other gallant fellows, their only hope of salvation being their safe arrival at one of the Western Islands.

In the cutter there was an awful silence: the near approach of darkness, although the weather moderated gradually, brought with it much apprehension to the minds of all; but as yet discipline maintained its place, and none spoke aloud of either dangers or difficulties. Hammerton, whose thoughts took a homeward range, looked into futurity with a dreadful fear. In the event of his death he beheld his sister an unprotected orphan; his father he knew could not last long; his mother he believed alive, but upon the verge of the grave—for in comforting her husband she had ruined her own health: and thus did an hour fly in thoughts of home—of former happiness, and of trembling apprehension for the future. He was awakened from this dream of reality by one of the seamen asking "what he intended to do?"

"To reach the Western Islands," replied Hammerton. "We have only about two hundred and fifty miles to go, and I think they ought to bear about north-north-east of us."

We look up nearly our course, for there is the north star; the weather is moderating, and with another reef out of the sail and keeping her full we may force the boat along five or six miles an hour. But we have another hope almost greater than our success in reaching either Corvo or Flores,—which is the possibility of meeting some of our convoy: they will push for the Western Islands to repair damages, and some which were dismasted may yet supply us with a home. One thing, my lads, we must all join in—that is, a resolution not to waste the water in the breakers. We are all in the same perilous condition—any chance may save us; but we must not oppose ourselves to the possibility of chance rendering that assistance: each man must now be a sentinel over us all. With the water and our shoes, or what chance may throw in our way—sea-weed—a turtle perhaps,—we may manage to hold up well and strongly for three or four days: in that time, if no gale of wind comes to mar our hopes, we may be safe and snug on shore. At any rate, it is no use looking on the worst side of the picture. We are, it is true, in a sad situation, and nothing but forbearance, prudence, and courage can extricate us;—I thank Heaven, although I am the innocent cause of this calamity, that it was in endeavouring to save others I became that cause; you in endeavouring to save me have now need of the assistance of others: but as long as I live, my brave fellows, I trust you will neither want an example nor a guide. From me you must learn to bear without a murmur the privation of food, and from me you must learn to hold up against difficulties and dangers. I speak to men—men who have already volunteered to sacrifice their lives for the crew of a strange vessel, not one of whom was known to any of you; and now I call upon you to keep steady and resolute of purpose, in order that each may assist the other—that each may contribute to keep up the spirits of the rest.”

“I wish,” said an old fellow who was sitting on the after-thwart, “that we had the purser’s steward and some grog here to keep our spirits in the natural way.”

“We’ll do all that’s right, Mr. Hammerton,” said a second; “but I should like a drop of water just now.”

“Well, my lad,” replied Hammerton, “you can have it. I think it would be better now to begin as we are to go on,—to serve out the small quantity we must to allow each

other, to arrange the watches, and to make the best of this bad business. So now, Jones, hand up that breaker, and let us start the bung."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the gallant fellow as he reached his hand towards the object; and then he looked up with a face that showed the sincerity of his words while he said, "It's half, if not quite empty."

A thrill of horror ran through Hammerton: here at once half his hope was destroyed. The crew seemed instinctively to catch the rising fear, and a movement was made towards the other, when Hammerton said with great coolness, "Never mind; the ether is full, and we shall be safe long before that is finished." But no imagination can picture his feeling of horror lest the same words of distress should arise when the other breaker was lifted.

"It's full," said the sailor who lifted it.

"Thank God! thank God!" said Hammerton as he raised his hands to heaven. "How grateful, my lads, ought we to be that the man whose duty it was to have secured this breaker has done it more effectually than the idle fellow from whose carelessness we might have lost our lives. Is there nothing in the first breaker?"

"Why, it rattles a bit, sir," replied M'Donald, a hardy, fearless Scotchman, who had learned in his younger days to think a handful of oatmeal a luxurious feast; "and I think it must have a quart or two in it."

"Then let us begin with that first: hand it here."

A small pennikin which had been used to bale the boat, was likewise handed aft; and Hammerton, with steady exactness, measured the allowance to each. When this was done, he poured out for himself, taking about half what he had given to the others.

"No, no, sir," said M'Donald; "fair play's a jewel. Molly, let go my hair and I'll fight till I die! We won't have a drop more than you, and you must take your allowance. You served it out to us, and now I will stand mate of the tub and give you your portion."

Hammerton, who had controlled his desire, could not resist this generous display of feeling in his comrades; and the last drop in the breaker hardly gave him his full and fair allowance. "And now, my lads," said he, "I think from the feeling you have just manifested, that we shall all face this danger like men. We must not, however, leave

ourselves blindly to chance. We are in the hands of Him who made us; but we must exert all our powers to retain the life He has been pleased to bestow. This, in our case, will be best effected by regularity. We will divide ourselves into three watches. M'Donald and Jones, you are in the first watch; Wilson and Barrow, you are in the second; and Henderson and Williamson, you are in the third. I am in all your watches, to be on the alert continually. And now we must pipe the hammocks down: but, before we go to sleep, let me implore you, my lads, to kneel down with me, offer up thanks for our delivery until now, and earnestly pray that God's mercy may still be extended towards us."

The six men then, with the exception of the steersman, joined Hammerton, who knelt in the stern-sheets, in a short but heartfelt prayer for deliverance.

As Hammerton ceased, a simultaneous Amen responded from all; and "they rose," as M'Donald said, "better men, with better courage."

The cutter was a lugger-rigged boat, with a fore and mizen sail. Both were now set without any reefs; and those who were appointed to keep the first watch came aft into the stern-sheets; the other four went forward, or in the midships of the boat; and Hammerton lay down with his head on the breaker of water. Young as he was, he knew that when hunger or thirst assailed, reflection never interposed her authority to check the desire. He had read of shipwrecks, and of crews on rafts, even during the first night, having seized the provisions, and in one moment rendered starvation a certainty: but in these acts of insubordination, the mischief had generally arisen from bad characters, who were only to be controlled by fear of punishment; and as that restraint had been withdrawn, the wild disposition had broken adrift to the prejudice of all.

Amongst the six men there was put one who bore a suspicious character—and this was Jones. Hammerton had placed him under the eye of M'Donald, one of the finest specimens of a British sailor—a man known for his rigid adherence to truth—a petty officer, a good seaman, a brave and a generous man; and when Hammerton placed Jones in his watch, he conveyed by a glance of his eye what his tongue would have said had he been on board the Tribune. It may be supposed that Jones could not be a very bad man, as he risked his life for others; but history affords many instances

of the most doubtful characters not unfrequently proffering generous assistance.

It was not without a suspicion that Jones might attempt to purloin a draught of water that Hammerton made the breaker his pillow. The calm tranquillity of a good conscience assisted him to sleep; and in a situation which would have kept most people awake, did five out of the seven find refreshing repose. Hammerton was frequently on the alert during the night, in order to see that the boat's head was kept as much towards the north star as possible; and when the approaching daylight hid that guide from their eyes, he steered the boat himself, making a due allowance from the rising of the sun.

At daylight each anxious eye was somewhat saddened from the conviction that not a vessel was in sight,—no fog bank even gave a hope, a momentary hope, that land was in view;—and many of them would willingly have been deceived;—but on this occasion, the eager eye, which scanned with expressive care every second of the degrees by which they were encircled, sickened by the useless effort, and the tongue bore witness to the fact as it repeated, "Nothing in sight! nothing in sight!" The wind, however, continued fair, and the little cutter slipped along. This was some consolation; although now the appeal of human nature in the shape of hunger came rather strongly, as if determined to draw its proper attention.

For two days their condition remained much the same, ~~saying that the wind shifted to the north~~; and Hammerton saw the first approach of insubordination on the evening of the third day in Jones's careless levity, and in his many expressions, approaching even to taunting Hammerton with having been the occasion of their misery. M'Donald sat quietly on the afterthwart, making as much out of a shoe as would suffice for breakfast; and the even-tempered Scotchman, as he returned it to his foot, after he had taken his allowance of water, said, "Aweel—aweel, I'm just thinking it's no very great hardship, after all, to have soles for breakfast: and an idle mon might rather like the business of being obliged to do nothing, just as well as holystoning the lower deck during his watch below."

Jones, however, soon began to show a worse spirit: he could neither control his hunger nor his tongue, and he vented his abuse against all the creation at a breath, finish-

ing by making an attempt to tear the leather-hat from Wilson's head. Wilson defended that which was not only a defence for his head, but his all for his stomach, and a serious affray took place. Hammerton immediately rushed at Jones, who now boldly disobeyed his orders, refused to acknowledge his control, and in the fury of his passion struck him more than once; the others took their officer's part, and the business finished by Jones being rendered incapable of more mischief, from the exhaustion his exertions had occasioned.

This was, however, a sad harbinger of that which was to follow. The line of discipline had been cut through, the officer had sunk to the level of his men, an open defiance had been manifested, it was evident that each person was too much occupied with himself, to pay any attention to Hammerton's directions. The many long hours of daylight,—long, for no occupation but that of thought could interfere to divert hunger,—wore slowly away. Jones refused to take his turn to steer; he lay forward with his face in his hands, cursing and swearing, and calling loudly to the others to seize the breaker and have a good hearty draught at once. It was evident that he had not a very inattentive audience—Barrow and Williamson seemed much inclined to join him; and although the evil was postponed, yet the thought had been engendered. Towards noon the wind died away, and the idle and useless sail flapped against the mast as the boat rolled from side to side.

Hammerton, who knew that every minute was precious, suggested the necessity of using the oars; and one or two, such as M'Donald and Wilson, immediately took their places. But when they found that Jones, Barrow, and Williamson refused to lend a hand, they remained inactive; and quite unavailing was the example set by Hammerton, who seized an oar, and worked away, until fatigue and annoyance overcame him. He addressed his men again: but it was useless,—they were clamorous for water, and they resolved to have it. In this they were opposed by M'Donald, Wilson, and Hammerton, who in vain kept saying, "Fools that you are! you only hasten what you wish to prolong. Should you gratify your desire now, how are you to wet your parched lips five hours hence? Is it not better to bear a little suffering, than wilfully to increase it? The more you drink, the more you will require; whilst, on the contrary, the less you accustom yourselves to, the less will be requisite to sustain

life. And now, while the calm prevents the approach of any vessel—now is the time to endeavour by the oars to alter our position, that, should any vessel be near, we may approach her.”

“All very fine,” said Jones: “but I’d rather die outright than feel what I do.”

“If you’d just keep yoursel quiet,” said M’Donald, “you’d nae have the fever upon you as you have now.”

“Keep the devil quiet!” returned Jones. “I tell you I’m thirsty, and I would rather jump overboard five hours hence than live until to-morrow evening and be saved as I feel now.”

“Oh,” said Barrow, “no gammon, M’Donald; it’s now every man for himself, and God for us all; and I say, let’s have a good drink, and never mind to-morrow.”

At this instant Hammerton saw, or fancied he saw a vessel: it turned all thoughts immediately to the mutual safety, and with one accord they agreed to take to the oars if an extra allowance was served out; but without this, three of the crew positively refused to work. This was a moment of intense anxiety. The quick sight of M’Donald had confirmed Hammerton’s report; whilst Jones, desperate from fever almost to madness, and blinded from eagerness, immediately caught hold of the haliards of the yard and in a moment was at the mast-head. The boat had rolled heavily before from the swell; and as miseries and misfortunes always assail those in distress, so were they now true to their usual current: the boat surged over on the larboard side; the haliards had been belayed on that side and made the only security to the mast,—it snapped just above the thwart, and mast, sail, and Jones fell overboard. It would have been well for the rest had this man met his fate: but although he was the cause of all the confusion which had prevailed, for he alone had commenced insubordination, and the chance of escape also might be sacrificed if he was saved, yet such is the inherent generosity of British seamen, that each stretched out his hand to his assistance; and as M’Donald said, “Here, Jones, just seize this, my mon,” he continued drily enough, “I’m just thinking that we might spare his company, for all the good he’ll do us.”

The wreck being saved, the sail was rolled up, and even Jones, having seen the vessel, thought it was as well to take an oar; but not one of the three would pull a stroke until

some water had been given them, and Hammerton, knowing that every minute became more and more precious, persuaded M'Donald to yield to the desire of the three men and give them an extra allowance. The small quantity only gave an additional desire without quenching the thirst, and Hammerton discovered his error when it was too late; for the three discontented men, after pulling about twenty strokes, laid their oars athwart, resting their arms upon them, and in sullen determination expressed their resolution not to pull another stroke until they had more water. The haze which the calm occasioned was going off as the sun declined, and the stranger was plainly visible: it appeared as if they had already neared her considerably, and Hammerton was not without hope that, could he near her a little more, she might distinguish the mizen of the boat, which still remained hoisted. It was this apparent closing with the stranger that made the refractory more clamorous, and the reasoning of the disaffected reached all but M'Donald.

"We shall be saved in an hour," they said, "and therefore, why suffer what we do suffer, when at the end of that time we shall not need it! Give us the water now and we will work like men; but we are not horses, to work first and be fed afterwards."

Time now was not like the tortoise—every moment was of value: the slightest breeze might fill the sail of yonder ship—the setting sun and coming darkness might shut her from the sight of those already fatigued with watching her; and who was to inspire the wearied and the hungry with courage when the object which was to relieve both should be invisible! Whilst the finger could point, the eye bear witness, and the tongue assert, "There she is," there was hope.

"My men," said Hammerton, "why throw a chance away! It is true there is the vessel, and we have neared her; but we are not yet on board. A breeze may spring up: our mast is gone—rendered useless. How then are we to keep sight of her but by the oars! Consider the valuable time we are losing: for if before sunset she does not see us, the evening breeze may take her from us; and then what are we to do without water, without provisions, without mast or sail, our strength exhausted—our hope gone? Take example by me and M'Donald, my lads; work as we work: every

struggle brings us nearer our salvation—every moment lost renders our chance more desperate.”

It was quite useless: the three men refused to pull a stroke, and the fourth and fifth men now followed their example, leaving M'Donald and Hammerton, the only two who still plied the oar and kept the boat nearing the stranger.—At last M'Donald said—

“I'm thinking, Mr. Hammerton, there is but one thing to do, and that nae so pleasant to you and me, who are not such down hearted curs as those vagabonds without courage forward. I'll just propose to you one thing which will make them work,—and that's the only thing that will, since we've no boatswain's mate among us. Give them the breaker and let them drink their fill, then start the rest overboard. It's a desperate measure, sir; but we have to deal with desperate men, and every minute now is worth an hour hence.”

“Good God!” said Hammerton, still pulling away; “what do you propose, M'Donald? Suppose we do not reach her, what is to become of us?”

“Die like men, Mr. Hammerton,” replied the cool Scotchman; “and if we don't do it, we shall die like a pack of cowards, as those fellows are there. I'm thinking I've half a mind to see if one of the stretchers might not get a little life into them.”

“I'd just advise you, you Scotch fascal,” said Jones, “to put a little life into us that way, and we'll put a little death into you.”

“That's the mon, Mr. Hammerton,” replied M'Donald, “whose life we saved half an hour ago! You see, there's nae use in piping to people who canna dance.”

“It is one and all,” said Hammerton, laying in his oar: “and now then for the water.”

At this intimation all hands made a rush aft; two of the oars went overboard and drifted astern, none making an effort to save them; and Hammerton and M'Donald not seeing them, the others took care not to say a word about that which might keep them lingering even a moment. With greedy lips each applied his mouth to the pannikin, which was filled and refilled until every one was satisfied. Hammerton as he took his last draught shook the breaker, which did not contain more than half a gallon, and proposed to save it.

“Nay, nay,” said M'Donald, “that is of nae use even for

two of us. Look here, you Jones,—there's the ship: do you see her?" Jones nodded. "And here," said he as he started the rest overboard,—“here is no more water—not a drop, and now the oars and your own labour is your only chance.”

This desperate act recalled every man to his senses: they took their seats, and bitter were their curses as the boat's head was turned from the ship in order to recover the oars. Some time was lost in agreeing to do so; but Hammerton was resolute, and as even hunger was satiated for the moment by the large quantity of water swallowed, the last spark of subordination gave its twinkling light before it was extinguished for ever. The crew now became sensible that their only chance was hard work and no flinching. The stranger must have been about eight or nine miles distant, and Hammerton, as he cheered them on, said,—“Two hours at the farthest, and we shall be safe. Give way, my lads; don't keep looking behind you! And then think how much dearer life will be when by our exertions we shall have saved it. Stretch out, my lads!”

The men pulled, and pulled their strongest; M'Donald was the only one who responded “Pull away, boys!” the rest used their utmost strength and in silence did their work. In about half an hour they had neared the vessel considerably, and in an hour, had the vessel been as eager to discover vessels as merchant ships generally were during the war time, the boat's mizen might have been seen; but the captain was more intent upon trimming his sails to a light breeze springing up from westward. With dismay Hammerton saw the studdings set to catch the wind, and imagination pictured the ship increasing her distance. Now came the fact that the time lost in disputing about the water had been the most precious in their lives; now was the truth confirmed, that had they stuck to their oars when they first used them, they would have been nearly if not quite alongside of that ship which, beginning to feel the influence of the breeze, was no longer lying becalmed upon the waters, but, with her head in the same direction as the boat, was evidently, from the steady course she maintained, under the influence of the helm.

Every man saw this, and every man felt now or never was the moment. The moment had passed: in vain did the man steering the boat stand up and wave his handker-

chief; in vain he bawled his loudest—his voice never reached one hundredth part of the distance; in vain the more and more wearied men used their efforts to near her. The palpable truth admitted of no doubt: the vessel was increasing her distance, the boat was unseen, the sun was about to set, and further exertion was unavailing. One by one the oars were laid in; the breeze had not as yet reached the boat; and although a cat's-paw or two appeared broad on the bow, and perhaps aloft, there was a breeze, yet they who heeded it most never felt it.

"It's nae use, I'm a-thinking, Mr. Hammerton, to pull onesel to death after this manner," said M'Donald: "we had better see if we can get the foresail up, and they might see that."

This last chance, desperate as it was, was tried: the broken part of the mast was placed on the step, and two of the crew kept it upright, whilst others lashed it to the thwart and hoisted the wet sail. Then might have been seen the last effort of human beings, whose reason was half estranged by despair, endeavouring by every act to catch attention. One placed his jacket on an oar, and held it above the sail; another had fastened his handkerchief to the boat-hook, and was waving it to and fro; a third, who could not relinquish hope entirely, still pulled an oar, whilst he who had steered relinquished the tiller; and standing up, supporting himself by the mizen-mast, still hailed the more distant ship, as the tears of disappointment ran down his cheeks. Jones had applied the breaker to his mouth, and had perhaps succeeded in squeezing one drop from the bung-hole, when Williamson snatched it from him and in vain attempted to be equally successful: enraged at the disappointment, he threw the breaker overboard, and fell exhausted on the stern-sheets.

In the mean time the light breeze had reached the boat, —a mere prolongation of agony; the end of the halyards was passed round the mast, and secured it pretty firmly to its thwart; M'Donald and Hammerton tied up a hasty reef; and the boat thus placed under canvass, made some progress to the southward, in which direction the ship was still plainly visible, and even then hope would not be entirely defeated. Few were the words spoken: Hammerton steered, keeping his eyes fixed upon the ship; but shortly the sun, in one

unclouded blaze of light, touched the horizon, sunk, and was invisible.

It were useless to picture the last efforts of the nearly exhausted crew. Again the oars were tried; again was the cheering voice heard; again the falsehood which hope had pictured as a truth, that they neared the ship fast, was declared; again even the little jest was heard; again the "Give way, boys!" resounded, until the fast coming clouds of night gathered over the clear sky above them; and as the obscurity increased, the darkness of despair became more intense; but when the vessel was ultimately lost sight of, more than one groan reached the ears of all. All was over—every effort was now unavailing: no star would direct them in their pursuit, no compass point the right bearings; the resolute and robust sank fatigued and overcome; the oars were once more hoated; and had not Hammerton still remained faithful to the tiller, not another man would have given himself the trouble even to steer the boat.

It was at this dreadful crisis that the thirst, satiated for the moment, had now been recalled by the exertions which had been made; but all knew that no remedy remained. After venting their curses upon Jones, who had been the cause of their sufferings, some extending them to Hammerton, who, had he acted at first as he acted ultimately, would have saved them, the voices, even in cursings and blasphemings, grew more and more indistinct, until nature was entirely overcome, and all but two sank into a kind of stupor, remaining for some time insensible to the peril which surrounded them. Two, however, mastered even exhaustion; and in the stern-sheets of the boat, Hammerton and M'Donald knelt down, and again implored the Divine support during the miseries which impended.

CHAPTER X.

Despair, murder, and punishment.—Hope to the last.—A Sail appears.—Rescue.

NOT long did the pleasure of forgetfulness remain—not long could those lulled in the stupor which over-exhaustion had occasioned continue in comparative blessedness. The last hour of life will not come for the miserable and the afflicted, however eagerly it may be desired; and although the strongest are sometimes laid low by the most trivial event, yet the spark is not always quenched without the fierce struggle which hope to the last moment never fails to inspire. It is well it is so; else the faint of heart would, when the bright colours became a little dim, sink into dejection. But strange—passing strange it is, that those who are nearest to death cling with the greatest tenacity to hope! In atrophy, does not the poor, emaciated, exhausted skeleton propose schemes, the fulfilment of which would require the longest life; and when the winter is at hand, and death at the door, plan parties of amusement for the coming spring, when Nature shall revive, and Fashion give new laws?

The light breeze which had sprung up during the latter part of the day freshened sufficiently to blow the mast over the side, the lashing having been insufficient to maintain it erect, more particularly as the broken part only rested on the step. Hammerton and M'Donald retained sufficient energy to save both, and the wet sail was hauled carefully into the boat, and the mast placed in security. It was now evident that starvation was near at hand, and that within the small space of a few hours one must die for the rest. M'Donald remarked,

"I'm just thinking, Mr. Hammerton, that we are in a doleful situation,—we're without water, and without a morsel to eat; and its nae use being frightened to death, and still less use putting one above the rest. Misfortunes humble us alike, and now we are all equal. Its nae use calling a mon

an officer when he has nae authority: and the captain himsel would not get much attended to by yon Jones there, who's already as mad as a real Bedlamite, and has been drinking the salt water for the last quarter of an hour. You and I, Mr. Hammerton, have more strength left in us than all the rest put together; and I'm thinking that if any stranger hove in sight now, we should have to save the others. There's poor Henderson, a child who has seen better days than these,—for none of us has ever seen worse,—he has been singing away as if he were under the forecastle bulwark in a gale of wind.

"And as for that child of the devil," continued M'Donald, "that Wilson, he has been amusing himsel wi' getting the pannikin and pouring it over Henderson's face to wet his whistle. I'm thinking, Mr. Hammerton, that they are all mad together: for there's Barrow swearing he's captain of the frigate, and ordering Williamson to be flogged. I've laid my head down whilst you slept, and I have heard it all. Now, Mr. Hammerton, you and I, by the blessing of God, are not mad yet; and I'm just a thinking that nothing shows a man's mind more than his preservation of himsel and his body. We must stick together and protect one another; we must keep close."

"God of all mercies!" said Hammerton in a feeble voice, for the last business of the mast and sail had almost rendered him speechless from exhaustion, "save and protect us in this awful moment."

"Amen, amen!" repeated M'Donald. "I say amen, sir; but I'm thinking that it's the first law of nature to save yoursel. And of what use is a mon to himsel when he is not himsel? It's nae doubt very bad to commit a murder; but I'm thinking, Mr. Hammerton, that it's nae sin to kill one to save five."

"For Heaven's sake, M'Donald," said Hammerton, "do not think of it! Better to die as we are, than to die with blood upon our hands."

"It's very right what you say, nae doubt," said M'Donald; "and as long as this piece of biscuit lasts, which I have kept pretty much to mysel, I'm thinking, since we got into this scrape, and which, with half of my shoes, has kept me more alive than the rest, I may think so too; but if we get mad, there will be murder enough, and perhaps all will perish then."

"Oh," said Hammerton as he lifted his hands, "that I could die this instant! And yet, my little sister, I would live for you!—who will protect you when I am gone—who will be a father to the fatherless?"

"Now, Mr. Hammerton, you are talking just for all the world like a madman and like a wise man. It's bad enough for the best of us all to die when we are summoned; but for any man to wish to die who is not absolutely mad, is a cowardice which I'm thinking was never born in that fine heart of yours. I've a child too in Aberdeen awa, and I must try to live to feed her."

M'Donald, who with his usual foresight and prudence had still kept a small piece of biscuit, because circumstances requiring it might occur either aloft or in a boat, was, as might be seen, the man best calculated to survive a desperate event like this. His coolness of temper, his general methodical manner of setting to work about any thing, had all calculated him to sustain hunger or thirst better than his more irascible neighbours. Now, however, that he saw starvation inevitable, his mind became busy with horrid thoughts. At this instant, Jones, infuriated to madness, cursing, swearing, and blaspheming, rushed with an open knife upon Henderson, who was singing a sailor's song, but not with a seaman's voice; and as he reached the part

"There's a sweet little cherub sits perched up aloft
To look out for the life of poor Jack,"

Jones caught the words, and rushing with maniacal fury upon his comrade, exclaimed, "I'm the cherub, my lad!" and plunged the greedy blade into his heart.

M'Donald saw the deed, and his goodness of heart overcame every other feeling; he staggered forward,—for Henderson lay on the second thwart from forward,—and wresting the knife from Jones's hand, whilst he in vain attempted to clutch it more closely, threw it overboard and instantly seized upon Jones. The confusion and scuffle awoke the others, who, recovered a little from their sleepless drowsiness, joined in the uproar with their maniac companion.—By the united force of M'Donald, Williamson and Barrow, Jones was removed from the exhausted Henderson. The stream of life flowed fast away from the murdered man, and soon reduced him to so weak a state, that he died without

an effort to save himself; and, with a calmness and composure only known in deaths like these, surrendered up his spirit without a groan or a sigh.

Jones, with the violence of a maniac, now seized upon M'Donald: but the wary Scotchman, in order to shake off the murderous nip of the madman, vibrated the boat from side to side, until, watching an opportunity when she surged over on the starboard side, he shook Jones from his hold. The murderer fell overboard and was drowned.

Far different was it now from that day when he fell with the mast!—no friendly hand was now stretched out to proffer assistance—no eager voice cheered him to exertion—no rope, no oar, no boat-hook was thrown or held towards him—not a man but Hammerton heeded the feeble cries of the poor wretch, and he sank within a foot of the boat unable to assist himself, and without exciting either the pity or the compassion of his shipmates.

"I would I were you!" said Hammerton to himself as he watched the extended circles caused by Jones's fall. "Far better to be as you are now, than to linger a few hours more; to see reason blighted in others—to hear murder defended—perhaps to live upon the unnatural food forbidden by God, and only countenanced by the savage,—and to feel the gradual approaches of idiocy pushing reason from her throne. O God!" he added, "in the coming catastrophe may I glorify Thee to the last moment, blessed with the reason with which I am endowed, and surrender my soul to Thee as patiently as my poor comrade!"

It is certain that man is capable of receiving the greatest consolation from prayer—nay, that from the lull of disturbed nature which calms his mind he may even control for a time the very hunger which has dictated the appeal; and it was whilst Hammerton received this kind of momentary peace, for it is but an effort of the mind in the belief of the efficacy of the appeal as hunger must still do its ravage, thirst must dry up the mouth, swell the tongue, inflame the throat, and fever and fury do their worst,—that M'Donald staggered towards him and sank down at his feet.

"I could nae help it, Mr. Hammerton," he said: "the Lord forgive me for the act! I saw him murder Henderson; and although I was half inclined to do some dreadful act, yet somehow when I saw the deed I could nae keep my hands from the ruffian's throat. He's dead, poor fellow, and

I'm thinking, Mr. Hammerton, after all, that he's better off than the rest of us. I'm *very hungry, sir—very thirsty*; and before daylight, which seems as if it never would arrive, we may be starved!"

"Wait, wait, M'Donald," replied Hammerton; "there may still be some consolation in store for us, and mayhap we may yet be rescued from this dreadful situation by some vessel. I can survive another day on this leather, and if we could but manage to bathe we might alleviate our thirst; but though the water is very near, yet we are too weak to try the experiment: if we got overboard, we never should have strength left to get on board again. Wait until daylight, M'Donald."

"I'm just thinking, Mr. Hammerton," replied M'Donald, "that I'm getting mad very fast myself."

There came over Hammerton a dizzy giddiness—nay, the perspiration started upon him in large drops; he lay down, and became sensible of his situation by the intervals of reason between his wandering thoughts. Whenever a trifling reaction brought him to himself, a vision of home, his aged parents, his darling sister Amelia, floated before him; and when he could command his reason, he always had recourse to prayer for them more than himself.

At length the long-wished-for day dawned. M'Donald, a little relieved by an hour's slumber, was the first who caught a glimpse of returning light: he did not speak, but, resting his chin upon his hands, which were placed upon the larboard gun-wale of the boat, he watched the increasing light, which gradually appeared more palpable, until the sun itself, rising as it were from the bosom of the ocean, shone unclouded upon the miserable men, and showed their eyes the dreadful scene. The crew, now reduced to four, were disposed of in different parts of the boat; three were in a stupor, the fourth watching, and Hammerton praying; the daylight showed the latter the situation of himself and his companions. A light breeze still blew, the mizen was still set, and the boat's head would occasionally fly up towards the wind, and then fall off, drifting away to leeward.

The first thing which Hammerton perceived was some of the Florida weed close to him. He reached out his languid hand and caught it. Aware that it would only make his thirst the more intense, and yet unable to resist this glutinous sustenance, he carefully squeezed as much of the

water as possible from it, and was busily engaged in doing so, when Barrow saw the prize. A ray of reason returning, he watched the languid hand of Hammerton feebly retaining the weed. He was on the after-thwart; and as all restraint had long since been removed, hunger levelling all superiority, he sprang towards his officer and seized it. Hammerton held on; and M'Donald turning round and seeing the scuffle, was not behind-hand in securing his share. As they tore the welcome food from their officer, they crammed it eagerly into their mouths: the more they ate, the more they required. In this dilemma Hammerton managed to save for himself a thick piece of the stalk, by allowing both to get a good hold of some of the small branches and then slipping them off. His assailants now turned upon and attacked each other, leaving him free to secure a small piece in his pocket whilst he hastily swallowed the rest. This welcome assistance, and the still greater benefit derived that evening from the fall of a small shower, restored M'Donald and Hammerton a little; but Barrow before noon went raving mad, and he and his two comrades were in no condition to avail themselves of the blessing bestowed upon them.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, the forenoon having passed away without the smallest hope of relief from the appearance of any strange sail, that Hammerton perceived a growing wildness in M'Donald's manner. "He was thinking," he said, "that he should like to go mad, for then all his sufferings would be over." Hammerton endeavoured to use his own former reasoning against himself.

Another and another day passed; the breeze still continued. Whether the three men forward were dead or not, he was in ignorance. M'Donald had laid down to die. Hammerton had stretched himself along the seat of the stern-sheet; and the boat floated or drifted as the wind blew or the current ran. No motion was visible in any of the crew, save in Hammerton, who occasionally varied his posture: all of thought—all of memory was extinct. A boat of more wretched spectres never floated on the high seas. No words were exchanged: indeed two only could speak. Ten days of hunger and thirst had worn out even the strongest; and Hammerton, when he saw his staunchest adherent, M'Donald, lay himself down leisurely to die, felt the last chord of his own existence snap asunder.

How long they remained in this forlorn situation, not one of the number knew; but when the breeze died into a light flow of wind, and before utter exhaustion had prostrated all, a vessel which had passed about five miles from them had been seen by two; but the rest were not even to be roused by the words that a stranger was near them. A slight effort to attract attention was fruitlessly attempted, and when the sun went down the last hope disappeared with it.

It happened that the Jonathan of New York, in her return to her port, crossed the track of this devoted boat. The wind being light, and the merchant-ship hardly steering through the water, she might have been seen to alter her course. A lug-sail had been observed by one of the seamen who had crawled aloft to repair the foot of the fore-top-gallant sail; the glass confirmed her as a boat apparently untenanted; the ship neared the unusual stranger, and objects became more visible—still not a soul was seen. The sea was smooth, the boat rode upon the water without rolling; and in that manner she was approached by the Jonathan, until the ship was steered alongside of her. The horrid stench was enough to frighten the American from his first intention of appropriating his prize to his own use. And when he ran alongside, and, securing the boat, saw the five people motionless, the captain had determined to sink her, in order to avoid any fever which contagion might spread in his vessel. The mate's observation that one might be alive, induced the captain to risk a closer observation before he proceeded to put his intention in execution; and then it was, as the boat touched the side of the ship, that Hammerton lifted one hand, and murmured out loud enough for intense attention to overhear, "My God! my God! we are saved!" It required nothing more than the indication of life to prompt the most generous efforts of the American. Hammerton was brought on deck by means of a rope fastened round him: the buttons on his waistcoat, for his jacket had been lost, confirmed the captain in the knowledge of his rank, and he was instantly taken to the cabin, stripped, and laid in a cot. M'Donald was alive,—a hammock was ready for him: the rest were dead, not one showing the smallest symptom of animation. The horror of the scene appalled the bravest mind. The men were afraid to touch them; the loathsome smell still clung to the boat; and to

shorten as much as to alleviate the symptoms of growing discontent in those who were *ordered* to assist,—for when the men who retained symptoms of life had been removed even the boldest of the crew shrunk from the scene which by turning over the bodies of the dead was made visible to them—the order was given to scuttle her.

The boat which had been true to them whilst living, became their coffin when dead. The oars and sails were handed out; and when scuttled, she was cast adrift from the ship. She sank gradually as the water rushed in and filled her. In her sank the remains of Barrow, Williamson, and Wilson: they died without knowing that death was near; and the element which they had chosen for the theatre of their services rolled over them and swallowed them in its fathomless abyss. The crew of the Jonathan watched the last inch of the gunwale as it gradually sank below the surface, and the waters of oblivion and eternity covered the dead.

CHAPTER XI.

The Tribune ashore at Halifax.—Awful night.

On board the Tribune of course the greatest anxiety prevailed as to the fate of Hammerton, and his comrades. From the time the haze cleared off, a most vigilant look-out was kept for the boat; as the wind subsided, guns were again fired, men were placed aloft with glasses, and not an officer in the ship went below until darkness came on, and it was beyond question that no boat was in sight.

To leeward were two of the convoy; one dismasted, and the other in all the confusion of a merchant-ship whose sails had been split by the squall. They were a considerable distance off; and one of them showing a whiff as a signal to speak the commodore, it was surmised that Hammerton with the boat might have reached the vessel. The Tribune, therefore, bore up, edging away to the south-east. This, as the boat had stood to the northward directly the north star was visible, made the distance so great between them, that the dawn of the next day only confirmed the apprehension of the last evening. Still, however, there was hope. When the boat was last seen, she was near some of the ships; and although the vessel which had shown the whiff in order to get some assistance had not seen her, yet others might have picked her up: and thus those who really liked Hammerton, and who knew the value of men ever ready to risk their own lives for others, kept up their spirits under the delusion that they should meet again at Halifax. Captain Barker being unable to persuade the captains of the two merchant-ships to continue their course,—one having sprung a leak, and the other being a complete wreck,—he lent every assistance to the former; and having rigged jury-masts for the latter, they stood away to the northward, made the island of St. Mary's, and then parted company from the frigate, which ship continued her course to her destination without one of her convoy.

On the 16th of November the harbour of Halifax was discovered; the wind being from the east-south-east, blowing fresh, and the ship nearing the land fast. Murray, whom Captain Barker had noticed from his exertions to be of service in the boat, and from his conduct since on every occasion, was ordered to get ready to go ashore in the gig. Released from the surveillance of Hammerton, he had joined Weazel in all his frolics; and the messmates of both, regarding them as youngsters likely to rise to high honour in their profession, as they had so gallantly come forward on the before-mentioned occurrence, overlooked most of their practical jokes or laughed at the frolics of the boys.

The harbour's mouth being visible, and the dangers of the navigation known, Captain Barker desired the signal for a pilot to be hoisted, and the ship to be hove to. The master, Mr. Clubb, a man of known worth, and yet not worth much, seeing that if the pilot came on board, the money allowed for that service would pass into other hands, remarked to Captain Barker, when he gave the above order, that he had before beaten a forty-four gun frigate into the harbour; that every rock and shoal was as well known to him as the dead-eyes in the main-chains; that as the captain was anxious to anchor without delay, he would take charge of the ship, and as the wind was fair there could be no danger.

To such a statement what captain could advance an objection? The signal was countermanded. "Never mind the gun—forward," was heard; the sails were filled; and the commander of the frigate, in the full assurance of the perfect security of his ship, having ordered leadsmen into the chains, went below to his cabin in order to collect his papers, prepare his report, sign his log, and finish his letters. In the mean time the Tribune approached the Thrum-cap; and Mr. Clubb, having consulted a negro who had formerly belonged to Halifax, but whose character was sufficiently bad to have subjected him several times to punishment, felt convinced the ship was standing in free from all danger. To his question to this effect, he might have remarked the malignant, sinister look of the black, as he replied, "Him steer good course, sar,—no ab fear, Massa Clubb—him shoal out there; and really for true, the man wid um lead no more use than rum to catch Jamaica-fly."

Mr. Clubb in reality knew nothing at all about the pilotage; and in those days the admiralty charts were not on the

splendid scale of the present time. Not overflowing with the golden current, he thought that, under the directions of the negro, and with the assistance of Mr. Galvin, one of the master's mates, a man conversant with the difficulties and dangers, the harbour might be entered in safety without the pilot-money going to a stranger. In all cases like the present, a certain timidity may be observed in any man undertaking what he knows he cannot perform; and to such a nervous degree of excitement had Mr. Clubb arrived, that he took fisherman's turns, called out to know the soundings, looked over the side, and exhibited feelings very contrary to the calm disdain of danger arising from accurate local knowledge.

About noon the ship had approached so close to the Thrum-cap, that Mr. Clubb could no longer command his fears: he sent down instantly for Mr. Galvin, who followed the messenger on deck at the moment that the man in the chains called out, with the long, careless notes by which the soundings are invariably accompanied, "By the mark five!" The negro, who considered himself the pilot, and who was quite pleased with the confidence reposed in him, remarked, "Berry good leadsman;—teddy boy at de helm:" but Mr. Galvin's look of horror, when, on jumping upon one of the carronade slides, he beheld the situation of the ship, convinced Mr. Clubb of the danger she was in; and as he seized the wheel with the intention of wearing off shore, the ship struck with tremendous force and remained fixed upon the rocks.

Mr. Weazel, who was below, instantly called out to Murray, "By Heavens, Murray, the ship's fallen overboard, and you'll have to walk on shore on the iron ballast!" Murray had no time to heed the fun. The confusion occasioned by this event baffles all description. The men had been sent below to clean themselves for going into harbour, the ship being considered by the first lieutenant as perfectly safe under the master's charge, with a leading wind and all marks plainly visible. The noise of the crew as they rushed upon deck, and the horror apparent in all, bewildered Murray, who found himself quietly seated on the deck. Weazel availed himself of the confusion to run against his enemy unawares, saying, "Out of the way, Johnny Newcome! don't you know the ship's on shore, and every man ought to be on deck?" Murray was not slow to follow his tormentor; and

if the squall mentioned in the preceding chapters had blanch-
ed the cheek of some of the oldest seamen, this calamity
produced a greater extremity of fear, for the men ran to and
fro without any order or regularity; and it required the
cool command of the captain more than once when he called,
"Every man to his station—shorten sail!" before order could
be restored. The order repeated soon enforced obedience;
but few can tell how hard it is to maintain discipline when
fear predominates.

As the sea rolled on heedless of the danger it created, the
Tribune felt every shock the more severely: the mainmast
as she struck amidships slackened the stay, and as she re-
covered herself, flew back to its original position with such
force as to render it dangerous to be near: the masts and
yards shook—nay, rattled, and it was useless to attempt to
send men aloft to furl the sails, for they would inevitably have
been shaken from their holds and have lost their lives. The
signal of distress was hoisted—and that signal is not made
on board a man-of-war, until the danger is imminent. It was
answered instantly by the ships in the harbour, whilst at the
military stations they conveyed the intelligence in land.
Then was to be seen all the generous ardour with which
men court danger to save their countrymen: boats from the
dockyard under the boatswain of that establishment, and
even some of the boats at the military stations, unawed by
the high sea and increasing wind, succeeded, after enormous
labour and unremitting struggles, in reaching the ship; but
others equally zealous in the cause, in vain toiled and toiled
—the sea drove them back into the harbour; and although
many more volunteered and again and again tried to render
service by being in readiness to land the crew, all labour
was ineffectual, and they were as often forced back until the
increasing wind rendered the attempt abortive.

In the mean time Murray was learning a great lesson in
his profession. It is in danger that British seamen are most
conspicuous: the boldest soldiers have been seized with a
panic and have fled—the English sailors have frequently at
a sudden disaster lost all courage for the moment; but both
rally, and as they look with more calmness at the accumu-
lating danger, so they brave it more steadfastly and oppose
it more manfully. Murray soon exhibited symptoms of his
daring character, and he even distanced Weazel, who was,
like himself, a novice in shipwrecks. Murray quitted the

captain's side only to convey an order—he knew in that alone he could be useful,—the order delivered he was back again; and young as he was, it was observed that when the ship struck the hardest, he betrayed no symptoms of fear, but kept his eyes steadily on his captain as if to anticipate his commands.

In the mean time the perilous situation of the ship became obvious: the gale was fast increasing; the night—a long night of November was closing in upon them; already had the haze of the evening dimmed the welcome shore, and the thick mist of the gale gradually spread around. The crew, assisted by those from the shore, were busy in lightening the ship: the guns were thrown overboard; every shot that could be reached, was thrown clear of the ship; the sails were backed so as to assist in clearing the shoals should she float; the stores were given to the sea,—every thing which could assist in the object, with the exception of cutting away the masts or the boats, was thrown overboard, and exhausted nature almost sank under the continued exertions.

It was now dark—the night had closed in: the rolling sea with its white heads came rushing on higher and higher: above no moon rose to cheer them, or exhibited the lamp of night to point out a place of refuge should she float; but the heavy clouds seemed to fly over the devoted ship, while as the sea increased she was lifted the higher to fall the more heavily. Ay, and well each seaman knew that the hard sides which had rolled over many a sea must shortly yield to the harder rock on which they struck, and that the worst danger now was her floating clear of the shoals. No bell marked the hour—no watch was called to relieve the tired—no hammocks were hung to welcome the sleepy; nor could all the exertions of the crew avail against the storm: the ropes were flying about unbelayed,—the whole scene on board was indelible confusion, and no one—no, not of those who have witnessed such scenes the most frequently, can draw any adequate picture of the dismay, the apprehension—the almost abandonment of hope on board the frigate. The long night had but begun, and who was to survive to see the sun rise? The gale came howling through the rigging, whilst the sea as it dashed against the ship surged by her with a deafening roar or broke right over her.

It was at half-past eight that Daniel Munroe, a fore-topman, who was then in the starboard mainchains, called out

that the ship was afloat: a sea which had threatened destruction swept her off the rock, tearing the rudder from the stern-post. The bell was instantly sounded, and the cry of "Seven feet water in the hold!" told the dismayed and wearied crew that all escape was impossible. Still, however, they did not throw a chance away: the chain-pumps were instantly rigged, and little Murray might be seen endeavouring to turn the heavy winch. His voice as he cheered the men seemed to recall them to themselves; and that boy by his example kept them to their work. They could not despair when a boy so young seemed ignorant of the danger; and as the carpenter reported that the pumps gained upon the leak their efforts were redoubled. Hope gleamed for a moment; it was possible that the anchor might hold—that the carpenter's report might be true, and that the ship might be kept above water until the long-wished-for dawn should appear. The lights which blazed upon the hills only convinced the crew that those on shore knew their danger; and as they stood high above the beach, they were no guides to lead them to the best place on which to run the ship. How many an eye was turned to those beacons—how many a heart panted to be there—and how often did the weary seamen look towards them!

The best bower was let go—that was an anxious moment; the cable flew through the hawse-hole, setting fire to the bits, and running out to the clinch, snapped. Vain was every effort to stopper the cable or to choke the hawse-hole: the sea was running too high for any cable to have checked her, and hope, justly painted as an anchor, had parted. The jib and fore-topmast staysail were now set: the former sail was split, but the latter answered the intention of keeping the ship off the wind; and in this might be traced the wavering indisposition which clung to the hope of yet saving the ship, and still running her nearer the shore, on which she must inevitably be wrecked.

The south-east gale still increased, and the shore bore north-west: no sail like a topsail could have been carried; and even if the reefed courses and close-reefed topsails could have been carried, the ship was too far to leeward to weather the points which embayed her; and now that heavy deadening sound which follows the roaring waves as they split upon the shore might be heard. The leak evidently gained upon the pumps—the approaching shipwreck was more

manifest, when again the last effort of seamanship was tried. Soundings in thirteen fathoms had been called, when the small bower was let go, the fore-topmast staysail hauled down, the mizenmast and all the topmasts were cut away, and for a minute even the least sanguine hoped. It was but for a minute: the ship, which had rode to her anchor, gave a tremendous pitch—the cable snapped like a rotten stick, and the Tribune fell broadside to the wind. The catastrophe was now at hand; the roar of the sea as it ebbed from the shore became more and more distinct; the surf—(for at that time, as if to mock the prayers of the weary crew, the moon shone to point out the horrid death which awaited them)—became visible, towering up the black steep rocks, obscuring them in its mist and then whitening the waters as they fell below. All order was gone. The crew crowded towards the gangway, from which the horrid view was most perceptible: some, knowing that death was close, resolved to gratify their appetites by breaking into the spirit-room, for that as yet remained untouched; some hastily reviewed their lives, and seemed to live again in scenes far, far away; whilst others knelt down and prayed. A few had been below and dressed themselves in their best clothes. But Captain Barker still remained on deck watching the near approach to the shore. Beside him, holding on by the capstan in order to steady himself, stood Murray: he appeared the only one unmoved by the danger; he had wound himself up to face any thing; and when Barker took his hand and pitied him and his father, the resolute lad replied, "We have yet a good struggle for life: I can swim, and I shall do my best."

It was about ten o'clock. The ship rolled over the waves, but there was an unsteadiness in the roll: each time as she recovered herself, she seemed to stagger like a drunken man; she did not rise quickly to the sea, and she fell with a more sullen lurch. The pumps were now deserted: the continued report that the water gained upon them had been made through Murray to the captain; and knowing that seamen may be disheartened, he kept the secret to himself. But the warning came from those who went below to have one long draught before they died: the after-hold was afloat, the cockpit was impassable, and they returned on deck shouting, "The ship is sinking! the ship is sinking!" Then indeed rose the cry of a loud farewell; then some ran up

the rigging, others jumped in the quarter-boats to cut them away, whilst others held on an oar or a spare spar. The order to cut away the lashings of the booms was quickly obeyed, for each saw a chance of safety from some floating spar; but whilst almost all were engaged in the work of self-preservation, Murray thought not of himself, but of others. In the ship were a few women and one or two children: they had come aft to the stump of the mizen-mast. The horror of the night, had the ship been whole, was sufficient to scare the weaker sex; but now that they comprehended the extent of the danger, kneeling down with clasped hands round their children, they vainly lifted up their prayers in all the incoherency of madness. But not for themselves did these women implore assistance: it was for their helpless children—for their daring husbands. This scene attracted Murray's attention; and, even at that moment, he endeavoured to comfort them. He persuaded them to run forward, as there they might cling to the rigging; he actually caught one of the children from the mother, tore it from her arms, and with it reached the forecabin. The mother followed, screaming for her lost child, and mingling curses upon Murray with the cry for mercy from above.

Captain Barker knew, and so did his officers, that every chance was over, and the ship would never float to reach the shore. He hurriedly took leave of all near him; whilst the women, believing that a captain can save, rushed towards him and knelt down, seizing him by the legs. It was at this distressing moment that the ship gave two heavy lurches, shook as if overpowered, and sank. A loud shriek arose that seemed the parting farewell of the brave crew; and two hundred and forty men, besides the gallant few who had reached the ship in boats, and the women, were in a moment plunged in the angry element.

Murray was at the instant when the ship foundered in conversation with Mr. Galvin, who was still urging the men below to try the pumps: both were washed clear from the ship, which as she sank soon touched the ground, for she had shoaled her water to about ten fathoms, leaving her upper works under the water, whilst her main rigging half-way up was above the surface. Each struck out to regain the ship and reached the rigging, although Mr. Galvin had managed to evade the grasp of three of the drowning crew, who had endeavoured to clutch him in their dying efforts. Murray

got into the maintop, supporting himself against the arm-chest, which had been secured to the mast.

About one hundred men still kept above water, holding on by the shrouds; the rest had perished—the sea had washed them far away, and their bodies rolled upon shore, breathless, dead. The foretop had been reached by ten men, who endeavoured to secure themselves there in the hope of surviving the night. No assistance was possible—no boat could have lived in that raging surf; the south-east gale was at its highest, and the iron-bound coast, as seamen call that part which presents nothing but abrupt hills or cliffs rising perpendicularly from the high-water mark, threatened that, should one more fortunate than the rest reach the shore, it could be only to be there dashed in pieces. Thus, deprived of all chance of succour, did these hundred men, worn out with fatigue and cold, make preparations to pass the night. For an hour the numbers scarcely diminished; but now, as the sea dashed over them, their grasp became more and more feeble. Then was the horror of the night at its highest; for sudden death, when the corpse is removed from sight, shocks not imagination like the gradual ebb of life, as wave after wave diminishes the strength, enfeebles the mind, and deadens the little remaining energy. Then was heard, as the wind appeared to lull under the approach of a roaring sea, the feeble cry for help; and when it passed rolling higher and higher, and boiling in its savage fury, one or two who called aloud for mercy were swept from the wreck.

CHAPTER XII.

Perilous situation of Murray.—Bravery of a Boy.—Cowardice of Landsmen.

THE storm continued with unabated fury—midnight was advancing. At first one by one of the men were swept away: towards morning the number had been reduced to about fifty. Despair soon rendered others desperate—more than one slackened his hold and dropped into the sure death beneath. In vain those higher up the rigging called out to their comrades below them to hold on; few knew the resistless power of the sea as it sweeps towards a shore—the utter uselessness of prolonged opposition; but above all other voices those of Galvin and Murray were heard still exhorting the men to pass their bodies between the ratlines, keeping their legs on the other side, and to hold on, “like grim death.”

Towards two o'clock almost the whole had disappeared;—some calling upon their more fortunate shipmates to bear home their last farewell and remembrances: others, with a levity ill befitting the scene, died cursing every thing, upbraiding those in the top for not changing places with them, promising to return to the post of danger when their strength was recruited; and whilst they thus taunted them with the coward disposition which kept them aloof from the greater danger, the mainmast fell and every one had a struggle.

Before this happened, Murray, being aware that in the event of an accident his clothes would much impede him, had stripped off his jacket and trousers, and although thrown off the main-top, he endeavoured to regain it; for, as if destined to be a haven of security to some, the top rested on the mainyard, that being held to the wreck by a portion of the rigging. Galvin reached it in safety; but Murray was yet struggling for life. His feeble efforts would never have availed against the sea which was now fast approaching, had

not Calvin reached out his hand to his aid; and catching firm hold of his hair, placed Murray in comparative security.

Still many hours were left to face death in its worst approach. How long—how very long—will the strength of man last, though wearied, when life, wretched life is the object of preservation? and after, perhaps, having surmounted the dangers—having avoided that which has been called “of all dreadful things the most dreadful”—how frequently does he linger on in poverty and wretchedness, toiling and labouring only that he may live, although life be a burthen to himself!

In this scene of desolation, when the angry waves burst against the shores, shivered like mighty artillery into minutest drops, uniting again as they fell and sweeping in their recoil the poor strugglers, who imagined themselves in safety from their grasp, how loud was the call to Him who had been until then forgotten!—Then would the insatiate wave sweep by and over them; and as they recovered their breath with frequent gaspings, they would see one of their number gone—the gap left where a human being had lived not a moment before, and another wave rolling on appearing to them higher than the last, or perhaps ready to burst upon them.

So passed the night—a night of horrors never to be effaced from the memory of Murray; and he—for justice bids us state it—was the boy (man he could not be called) who evinced the most generous courage of them all.

It was soon evident that the fore was a much more secure haven than the main-top: the latter, resting on the main-yard, was more liable to be swept to atoms than the one which was only passed over by the surf, and which remained stationary as long as the foremast would stand; whereas the maintop occasionally shifted, and from that insecure abode already two had been washed away. Murray, who was wise enough, if not sailor enough, to know that a few seas more—or only one if it burst upon them, would sweep them all to destruction, proposed to Calvin the dangerous expedient of reaching the foretop. Calvin was quite aware of the insecure position which they held; but he feared being swept away to leeward even from the hold of the rope by which he proposed to pass, and which was ascertained to be fast to some part of the rigging forward: he would not al-

low Murray to make the experiment alone, and he was fearful himself to be the first to try it.

"We never shall get there safe," said the brave fellow; "and as I have saved you once, I'm not inclined to lose you now. It is to be done; but you are too weak, and I cannot spare one hand if I have to haul myself along the rope."

"Then I'll go first," said Murray; "my life is of no more value than yours: I cannot make myself stronger, and by delay I shall become weaker. Give me the rope; I'll wait until this sea has passed, and then I'll start directly."

"I would rather," replied Galvin, "take my chance where I am. The top has held on, and may still; and I'm not sure but by changing we may be worse."

"That may be," said Murray; "but I think otherwise: you will do as you like."

The sea swept along as before—another and another had gone; and almost before it had passed, Murray swung himself upon the rope and contrived to reach the foretop in safety. Here, however, was no place of security: in the top three men were dead. They had clambered up the fore-rigging, as their shipmates had been swept away, until, from the crowds which had clung to the ratlines, ten only remained. These three, exhausted and half-drowned, lay down and died at the moment they were apparently safe; and Murray, when he reached the top and threw himself down, fell upon the lifeless bodies. Here, however, was a repose. The seas, as they towered along, swept, it is true, occasionally as high as the top; but, generally speaking, they passed below it, the surf or spray alone flying into it. A short time restored Murray;—he was not a lad to be killed easily—his mind would have supported him where almost any other's would have failed;—and he began instantly to see who were his new comrades. They were only four in all,—Dunlap, Munroe, Weazel, and another. The two first-named seamen considered themselves safe as long as the foremast stood—the last lay panting and almost dead; and after some conversation as to the probability of assistance at daylight, a feeble voice was heard in lubber's hole, and Weazel was recognised. Assuming the command, Murray desired Munroe and Dunlap to assist him in throwing the dead bodies overboard; and this was done without a murmur. He then got Weazel into the top and lashed him securely to the larboard side: he took the same pre-

caution with the exhausted seamen, and sat down to wait for day.

Far along the eastern horizon already had streaks of light heralded the approach of the sun; the thick masses of clouds, as they rose from the horizon to discharge themselves in heavy showers or to feed the wind, began to assume a lighter hue; the shore became more distinct; and the eye of hope could discern some few on the cliffs watching the wreck, and waiting as if to tender assistance.

Murray told his shipmates to fasten a pocket-handkerchief, or any article of dress which could be distinguished, to the broken part of the toprail; for he well knew that nothing would tend more to stimulate those on shore to render assistance than the proof that some were yet alive. It was useless to stand up and attempt to wave it, as Munroe did, for that was wasting strength; and sanguine indeed must that man have been who expected assistance, when he cast his eyes towards the shore and witnessed the tremendous roll of the surf.

Daylight came: Galvin was in the maintop—every man was gone but himself and four others, he seemed faint and exhausted. One by one they had dropped off—human nature could not support itself longer; the hands, so firmly fixed upon the shrouds, at last opened and the body fell;—there, rolling over and over, it was dashed against the shore without a sign of life, a mangled and breathless corse.

With the sun came a trifling decrease of the gale; the wind somewhat abated its force; but the sea rolled on, the surf looked more horrible than darkness, and Murray found it advisable to quench a little of that hope which evidently was nurtured by the seamen. As for Weazel, he was insensible: he lay stretched out, and Murray's kind attention to him, by rubbing his heart and his feet, alone appeared to keep in the little portion of life which seemed to flutter before it expired.

Long did the time appear between daylight and eight o'clock, and yet it was only half an hour. The conspicuous signal was answered from the shore, and hundreds were seen waving their hats, as if to animate the sufferers to a longer exertion; but no boat came—there was apparently no haven from which a boat could come,—all seemed an iron-bound coast, now whitened by the surf and spray.

"It is impossible," said Murray to Dunlap, who kept his

eyes fixed upon one part of the coast, "that any boat could live in such a sea as this. We had better keep quiet; we shall have need enough of all our patience and energy before we walk upon that cliff."

"I'd give a trifle just now," said Munroe, "for a piece of salt junk and a glass of grog: and I think I could hold out four-and-twenty hours longer."

"The gale is breaking to windward," said Dunlap; "and I think, if I were there, I would try if I could not get out of Herring Cove, which lies round that point. But it's not any of those men who are walking up and down like a marine before the cabin-door who'll get into a boat to save us: we had better do as Mr. Murray says, for we may have to swim for it."

"There goes another," said Munroe; and each eye was directed to the maintop. Another had been swept away: in vain the poor wretch held out his eager hands—no one could assist him, although for some short time he wrestled strongly against his fate. They saw him gradually grow more and more faint and faint, until at length a sea lifted him on its surge, and dashed him against the rocks. Those on shore saw and watched him approaching to the verge of the beetling cliff; but assistance was vain, and curiosity was soon satisfied.

It was now near eleven o'clock, when Dunlap called out the glad tidings that a boat was endeavouring to round the point. "I see her! I see her!" was spoken by all.

"Here, Weazel, my boy," said Murray,—"here's a boat coming off: cheer up! cheer up!"

"Leave me! leave me!" said the poor fellow; "let me die or sleep!"

"Neither one nor the other," said Murray, "if I can help it; we must all be awake now, for now comes the trial. She'll never reach us in this sea, I fear; and what a skiff it looks!"

"There's only one man in her," said Dunlap; "and how he is to get her through this sea I don't know; but he must be a right good one to venture it alone. They say it's sweet to be hung in company; and drowning alone is cold work."

"Ay," said Murray as he looked towards the maintop, "cold enough. Thank God, however, Galvin yet holds on; and if one boat reaches us, fifty may come. I don't think she nears us: do you, Munroe?"

"Yes, sir,—yes; he's farther out from the land than he was: but I'm blessed if I ever saw such escapes! There! he rides over it, and he's safe!—there! he bends his back! If ever that man lives to reach us, he shall have all my back pay; which, now as the purser's gone and his books are destroyed, will be a pound or two more than I reckoned upon."

"Hold on in the maintop!" roared Murray as he saw a sea higher than those which had rolled for the last quarter of an hour. It came, it passed—four only remained; but he that was gone was not watched—every eye was turned towards the boat.

It neared the ship; and then wonder, astonishment, exclamation, and gratitude were at the highest pitch. The boat was a mere skiff, pulled by a boy not more than thirteen years of age. With immense perseverance he toiled at his oars; as the sea approached him, he slackened his exertion, and the boat rose gradually to the swell. It passed; and the youngster again, as if inspired with supernatural strength, strove to gain his object. Nearer and nearer the little frail skiff approached the wreck, when Murray stood forward and waved for it to pull to the maintop. The boy never heeded the signal, but was pulling towards the foretop; and even those nearest to him, although they thought how sweet was life and how near the chance of saving it, never contradicted the order, as Murray screamed out to save the men in the maintop, and to leave him and his companions to another chance. There stood those weather-beaten seamen, their hair blowing out in the gale, wet, soaked, hungry, jaded, nearly exhausted: but they never opposed the generous offer; on the contrary, Dunlap said, "Galvin's a brave man, and he cannot last much longer. We are safe,—or, at least, safer than he is."

The lad who had thus nobly risked his own life was in no situation to pull about from mast to mast; and having got under the lee of the foretop, he turned his boat round and backed her towards it.

"Quick! quick!" he said; "I can only carry two, and I'm already nearly swamped."

"Jump in, sir," said Munroe to Murray.

"I jump in?" replied the youngster: "never! I was the one who proposed the boat should go to the maintop, and I will not avail myself of its having come here."

"Well said, sir," ejaculated Dunlap; "by G—d you will

be 'he greatest man in the navy: I won't go—I won't leave you !"

"And I hope I may drown if I do!" said Munroe. "No man shall say Daniel Munroe looked to save himself when his officer refused to leave the wreck. He may go ashore again for me."

"Let us put Mr. Weazel and this poor fellow in the boat," said Murray.

"Ay, ay, sir," both responded; and with the greatest care (for it was ticklish work, and as the boat could only touch the top brim, or rather come below it, for a second, and one instant's unsteadiness and the people they endeavoured to save would have been drowned,) did these brave fellows lift up Weazel and Waller, and landing them safely in the boat, gave the gallant youngster three cheers as he pulled towards the shore and left them exposed to all the perils they might have escaped."*

Those were no common-hearted men who could have cheered the boy as the boat left them again exhausted and in imminent peril: neither should the increased blackness of the clouds be altogether overlooked, for at noon on this day the weather again indicated a continuance of the gale. The eyes which one moment watched the skiff as it rose in security over the wave and surged along to its haven, turned

* This is no fiction—no conjuring up a hero to dress a novel; the whole is true—every name, with the exception of two, real—every circumstance occurred which has been mentioned; and the only regret now experienced is, that the name of the boy, who was worth a legion of men, should have escaped unknown. The historian of this calamitous wreck, James in his "Naval History," toiled with all his known perseverance (and if ever a man persevered in the cause of historic truth, James was that man; his unremitted research is perfectly wonderful) to rescue the name of this young hero from oblivion; but in the greater excitement which followed the loss of the Tribune, the poor little fellow's gallantry was forgotten: for those who looked on were ashamed of their own cowardice, and therefore did not come forward to attest the truth, when they must have been censured for withholding their aid; and thus he who ought to have been pensioned for life, who should have been held up as one worthy to be emulated, probably died in obscurity, and the fame of all his daring feats may have been usurped by another, who, whispering his own bravery, has risen upon the valour of the boy.

with a saddened apprehension to the squalls settling to windward; the dark mass of clouds resting as it were upon the horizon, while the higher roll of the sea indicated that farther off to windward the gale had increased rather than diminished.

Each man waved his hand as the boat darted round the headland and was in security. Murray felt an elevation of mind as he retraced what he had done. What would his father have said to this noble conduct? and how would all the faults of the boy be lost in the blaze of an action which the proudest man who ever lived might have rejoiced to have numbered amongst his greatest feats!

"They are safe," said Munroe, "and long before this are piping to dinner; but Mr. Weazel won't go to sleep without thinking of us. I recollect when you slipped overboard, Mr. Murray,—that day when Mr. Hammerton went adrift,—he was one of the first in the boat to assist you; and now you've saved him, and like a man too: and this is it, sir,—I must say I should like to shake hands with you."

"Here, my fine fellow," said Murray, holding out a hand; "and here's the other for you Dunlap; and if I could reach Galvin, he should have them both. Cheer up, lads!" he continued, "the worst is over. Those idle vagabonds will be ashamed to wander up and down there, looking on doing nothing, when that boy gets ashore and tells them that we are here. We must keep up our spirits."

"I wish I had some of the purser's spirits, I know," said Munroe; "and if ever I do get on shore, I'm mistaken if I don't bowse my jib up in memory of this escape."

"You had better be thinking of something else, Munroe," said Dunlap; "for the wind's getting up, and I see no one coming out to lend us a hand."

"But I do," said Murray; "for there is the youngster again, or his boat."

Again, sure enough, came the same boat and the same boy: tired as he was, the shout of applause which greeted him as he landed the nearly dead persons prompted him again to brave the perils he had escaped. "What! can't I get any one to lend me a hand?" said he. Not an answer was made. Some, it is true, were anxious to carry away Weazel and Waller, and all volunteered to take them to the nearest house; but amongst all the people there assembled, and there were plenty of seafaring men amongst them, not

one volunteered—not one threw off his coat and offered to stand by a boy of thirteen—not one proposed to launch a larger boat—nor even offered a reward for others to go!

“What! not one out of such a batch as you be?” said the boy. “Then here’s try it again by myself; and if I’m capsized, I hope some of you will look to mother, and take care she don’t starve or come to mischief. They call me a boy in the village,” said the daring lad as he sat down in his little boat and got his oars out; “but there is many a man of six foot high, and I see plenty of them, who is afraid to pull round Herring Cove Head; although if it was calm it would be, ‘Youngster! get out of the way and make room for a stronger hand.’—Give us a launch there, Bob, will you?” said he to a lad of ten years old; “and don’t let any one else but a boy touch the boat. I’m very tired,” continued the youngster; “but I won’t leave those to die who might have saved themselves, but gave up their chance to those poor helpless fellows I landed—and one of them is only a boy.”

“Stop,” said an old fellow of about eighty; “I will go with you.”

“No, no, daddy,” replied the boy; “you may as well stay at home and keep warm. There,” said he as he winded his boat, “look at that gray-headed man and be ashamed! There you stand hale and hearty by scores, and you let an old infirm man volunteer, and leave a boy to pull against a gale of wind!—Well, here goes!” and he forced his little skiff ahead in the smooth water: “one can but try.”

It seemed at first quite evident, even to those who felt a little inclined to a personal risk, that the boy would never reach the wreck; but those who saw what he had accomplished had yet some hopes; for the goodness of human nature at that moment overbalanced the slight satisfaction which would have been felt by all had the brave youngster perished: then indeed they might have found a trifling excuse in the circulation of the anecdote, while they heightened the danger and ridiculed the temerity of the action. The youngster when he landed his half-dead cargo was so fatigued as to be unable to render any assistance; but the buoyancy of youth rose superior even to physical exhaustion, and reanimated by the cheers which even these heartless cravens had given, he felt what he had accomplished and nobly dared it again.

In Halifax harbour every exertion had been made and

failed: the jolly-boat of the Tribune, which had left the ship with one or two officers who had witnessed the wreck, and who volunteered assistance in the first instance, and before indeed such a calamitous termination had been anticipated, had tried and tried again; but all in vain,—the sea ran so high near the entrance of the harbour that the boat was washed back, and more than three times nearly swamped. All that gallantry and a noble disdain of life could effect had been done in that quarter; but it was from Herring Cove alone that any assistance could be given, for it was a kind of soldier's wind, "there and back again," from that point; the greatest danger was in first rounding the headland—and from this Cove only a boy could be found to face the danger!

It was, as may be conceived, a time of intense anxiety to those in the fore, and the very few left in the main-top. The rest had all perished: each sea had taken its victim—each minute had rendered life more precarious. Hunger and thirst, fatigue, anxiety, hope, fear, had all contributed to waste energy, until at last one or two preferred an instant death to the lingering uncertainty and pain which assailed them. More than one feebly cried, "God bless you, boys, if you live to weather this gale, remember me;" others lifted up their dying voices in prayer, and as if inspired with a courage to overcome the fear of death, dropped designedly into the foaming waters below, and were swept in the boiling surf far far away.

"He does not get much ahead," said Munroe. "Poor fellow! I wish I was at that oar now. If he gets into the surf once—"

"Then amen," interrupted Murray. "We must hope for a better end to such a gallant spirit as that. I fear he does not near us at all; and to windward it looks very angry."

"I'm in hopes the gale is broken," said Dunlap; "for the clouds have risen considerably, and they don't hang together as much as they did."

"I wish," said Munroe, who in the height of danger could still find time for a bad joke,—“I wish all those fellows on shore were hanging together to those clouds with only slippery fingers to hold on by. A lazy, cowardly set of curs, to be airing their heels on the top of the cliff, when it's down below they ought to be washing them! I wish I had the mustering of those rogues by division, and leave to freshen their ways according to my notion!"

"Good God!" said Murray, "he is swamped!"

"No, sir," said Dunlap, who had watched the boat with almost breathless anxiety; "thank God! not so bad as that. He has given it up and has turned back—he must be tired indeed. He's getting nearer and nearer to the surf—ay, he does not meet it now as he did. There, thank God! he rises again over it: I thought that last sea must have swamped him. He's getting close; he'll do it yet!"—"Hurrah!" they all cried at once; "he has rounded the point and is safe."

CHAPTER XIII.

Murray's escape from the Wreck. His temptation and fall.—
New Year's Eve in Somersetshire.

THAT hurrah was sincere—the brave always feel for the brave. Murray, Dunlap, and Munroe felt a secret pleasure in believing the little hero safe, although it might leave them yet without a prospect of relief. Munroe, whose spirits were better and higher than those of his comrades in affliction, was the most vehement in praise of the youngster; and as they sat down in the top to rest themselves after the painful exertion, he said, "There's many a man been worse off than we are, and yet got saved. I have seen the weather fore-top-sail brace give way in a squall, and the lad who was fig-ging in the top-gallant studding-boom went overboard, the ship going about ten knots, on a dark night, and yet he has been saved. Something will be done from Halifax,—although, to be sure, it's getting towards dark again, and here we are like so many purser's shirts on a scrubbing-day hung out to dry after being pretty well seasoned with salt-water."

"It's quite impossible," said Murray, "that Galvin can hold out during the night; and who knows that the foremast may not go, and we be all sent adrift?"

"Then it will be fair play and no favour,—we should all have a swim for it," replied Munroe. "Why, Dunlap," continued he, "you seem to have got your figurehead a fixture,—why, you keep your eyes on the same bracings, and brighten up like a chap when it's 'grog ahoy!'"

"There's a boat coming out of Halifax," cried the seaman with delight: "I saw her just now. There! there! she is again rising over the sea to the left of that bluff point."

"I don't see her," said Murray.

"Let's take a squint, sir," said Munroe: "I'm more accustomed to a masthead-lookout. There she rises sure enough! Well, we've time enough to dive below, and get our chest and bags out of the lower deck before she arrives."

She'll get here!—they are not like those Herring Cove cowards. There! she rides over it like a duck!—Hold on, Galvin!" said he; "there's liberty for shore coming along. Cheer up! cheer up! we'll turn into a snug berth to-night yet."

"I pray that you may prove a good prophet, Munroe," said Galvin. "How cold and wretched I feel! and yet that boat keeps me in hope—she rides over it famously. I see her now! and she closes us fast! Why, there's another just astern of her!"

"Yes," said Dunlap, who had never taken his eyes from her, "I see three more: if the mast and top but keep together for another hour, we shall have a fair chance of being saved. When three or four boats pull together, one cheers the other, and no one likes to be first to give up: they are sure to be good ones, or they would not be there."

The foretop was the nearest to the boat now fast advancing, and every time she rose upon the sea, Murray turned his eyes to see if Galvin was safe: he appeared quite insensible, and lay stretched upon the maintop, his head apparently jammed in the rigging, which mainly constituted his support. The boat came within hail, and Murray stood forward.

"Pull first," he began, "to the maintop: we can hold on a little longer. But there they are quite exhausted."

The boat, however, still maintained its course for the foretop: the man who was steering the boat kept waving his hat, as if to cheer the sufferers to hold on longer; and seeing more people in the foretop, he directed his attention first to them.

"Not one of us," said Murray, "will get into the boat until those in the maintop are saved."

"This is no time for talking," said the steersman; "stand by to jump in as the boat rises." A sea came and washed them to leeward; the boat was again backed, and again all three declared they would not get into the boat unless she went first to the maintop. Seeing all persuasion useless, and having three times narrowly escaped, the boat went to the maintop, and by dint of great perseverance and most excellent management they succeeded in saving Galvin and two other men all insensible: they were lifted into the boats by those who availed themselves of a second's lull to jump into the top, when the rare opportunity occurred. By this

time another boat had reached the foretop, and the three gallant fellows, the only three who had maintained their senses, jumped into her, Murray insisting on being the last. Some cloaks had been brought out, and the almost naked, shivering son of Sir Hector Murray was the last who would accept of a covering, although from his appearance, and the eagerness of the two seamen to pay him respect, it was evident he the officer was the one who had most nobly behaved himself.

Out of a crew of two hundred and fifty people, twelve only had been saved; two by the youngster, six by the boats as just related, and four in the jolly boat before the ship struck the second time. Amongst those who perished were the captain, and all the lieutenants and midshipmen, with the exception of Weazel and Murray. The master, who was the sad cause of this wholesale calamity, and two hundred and fifteen seamen and marines, perished; but no blame whatever could attach to the captain.

It is unfair to deny an officer the small remuneration to which he is entitled—nay, it is a stimulus to make masters become pilots,—it is the hope of this reward which makes them toil whilst others sleep, to weary themselves in sounding shoals, and fathoming rocks and difficulties, when their duty on board is done. For one ship which has been lost by their cupidity and ignorance, to use no harsher language, (for in this case it is evident that when the master said he knew the pilotage, he was not speaking the truth,) hundreds of ships and thousands of lives have been saved. How often does it happen that ships in gales of wind are obliged to run for a harbour out of which, it being a lee-shore, no pilot can come! It is the knowledge of the pilotage by the master which saves the ship, and which, under his assertion that he is acquainted with the port, warrants the captain in seeking the security of a haven. But no words can be sufficiently strong to censure the conduct of those people of Herring Cove who refused to render any assistance, although stimulated by the successful exertions of a mere boy. Had this wreck occurred on the Goodwin Sands, thousands of those gallant fellows, the Deal boatmen, would have come forward. No surf would have stopped *their* endeavours; they would have tried, (although we are quite aware they might not have succeeded,) and those who clung to the wreck would have found that their countrymen keenly felt their

danger and did not hesitate to risk their own lives to avert it.

How imminent was the peril to the few who survived, may be conceived from the fact that, as the boats pulled towards the shore, the maintop was observed to have been washed away; and long before they entered the harbour, the foremast had disappeared! In one half hour longer, and all but two must have perished.

The generosity of the people of Halifax is well known to all officers of his Majesty's navy: on this occasion two of the principal merchants received the seamen into their houses. Murray was removed to the house of the commissioner, and every attention which experience could prompt and liberality supply was generously afforded. Two, however, died; but Murray, at the expiration of a week, was seen walking about quite recovered.

Strange it was, that he who felt so much for the life of the youngster as he turned his boat and left him almost without a hope—he who could then cheer him and speak in raptures of his conduct, had now grown proud with his security, and left till to-morrow the duty of inquiring after the boy. Not once even did Murray take the trouble of visiting Herring Cove. But the two seamen who, with Murray, had witnessed the boy's exertions, were no sooner recovered, than they walked over to the Cove; and having found the youngster, each gave him some trifle which they had saved when wrecked; however, they saw him only once, for men were much wanted in the different ships, and a week after they reached the shore, they were drafted on board different vessels, and were soon separated, perhaps for ever.

It now became a duty, which the commissioner urged upon Murray, to write a letter to his father. The reports of the loss of the frigate had gone to England without the names of those who had been saved. When such a destruction of life was circulated, a parent would feel most anxious to ascertain from his own child the proof beyond contradiction that he had been saved. The little energy which a sailor's life had instilled into Walter was fast ebbing, and day after day he was sinking into his former state. At last the packet arrived; and as the letters for the Tribune were directed to that port, Murray mustered up energy enough to inquire if there were any letters for him, or for the other midshipmen of the Tribune: he particularly asking for those which

might be directed to Hammerton. He received two; one for himself, and one directed to his unfortunate and still hated messmate. The blow given by the latter had never been forgotten; and even now, when he thought him dead, or far beyond his vengeance, he regretted the event, not in sorrow for the supposed sufferer, but because it deprived him of some of that pleasurable feeling arising from meditated revenge.

"I shall take charge of these two letters," said he; "and as both are in the handwriting of my father, I can mention to him my having received them."

Had there been any impropriety in giving up Hammerton's letter, the character which Munroe and Dunlap had spread of Murray would, in all probability, be considered by the postmaster a guarantee that the letter would reach its proper destination. The letter was given and quietly placed in his pocket, whilst that of his father to himself was opened and read. It was a letter of advice, not of credit: it urged Murray to be attentive to the advice of Hammerton, mentioned Sir Hector's close intimacy with the father, spoke in the highest terms of the little girl, and was very affectionate and very admonitory throughout. The curiosity of the boy soon mastered any honourable feeling he might once have been taught; and when he got into his own room, he began looking at his father's letter to Hammerton.

"I wonder," he commenced, "what that old respectable gray-headed papa of mine can be writing to this lout; of course it is all about me—he can have nothing else to write about; and as Hammerton, by the blessing of Heaven, has long since paid an unexpected visit to the sharks, I may as well learn all that he would have told me from my father himself. There can't be any harm in opening the letter, because if it does contain advice I ought to have the benefit of it,—and if it does not, why, I have only shown a laudable desire to be instructed. Then, if Hammerton is dead, which in spite of all the captain said is likely enough, he never can see the letter; and if he is not dead, I can remember the contents much better than I can send the original. So that, upon all the points of principle and interest,—and money matters rule the world,—I think I had better just take a peep."

The harbouring of a dishonourable thought is the first step towards the committal of a crime. He who is convinced that he

is treading upon slippery ground seeks the surer steps of the bank; but he who is heedless plunges at once into the mire. The more he then struggles to extricate himself, the deeper he generally sinks: like a man in debt, unless he can give up all at first, it is a hundred to one if he ever retrieves himself—as he pays off with the left hand, he runs in debt with the right; as a check is given for present payment, a bill at six months is drawn for trifling contingencies. The safest way then is to avoid all temptation.

Hammerton's letter was very unceremoniously opened; from the envelope fell an enclosure in the handwriting of Hammerton's father; and although the commissioner had given what money he thought requisite, yet the sight of the fifty pounds in his father's letter to Hammerton was irresistible. It was the easiest thing in life to say that it came in his own letter,—indeed, why mention Hammerton's at all? It was read, wondered at, skimmed again, concealed. The one from Hammerton's father was retained: in the event of being asked for a letter, there it was. Sir Hector had never written to Hammerton before, why should he now? It is the easiest thing in the world to imagine an excuse, but the most difficult thing in life to lie with consistency. The fifty pounds had cleared away all obstacles, the letter of Hammerton's father was returned to the post-office, but Murray slept not quite so soundly that night as after he had landed and saved Weazel.

In the mean time, the last-named gentleman having recovered from his fatigue, began some of his boyish tricks; and his room being preferred to his company, he was despatched to England to join some other ship, where we propose leaving him to follow the fortunes of our more prominent friends.

New Year's Eve 1799 was kept in all due form by Sir Hector Murray: the ash and faggot ball, a Somersetshire piece of antiquity, was held at Taunton, and the worthy baronet who was always partial to old customs, made a point of attending it. In those days, when the hour of midnight of the 31st of December was close at hand, large faggots bound round with ash bindings were placed upon the fire; the company generally sat round this blazing hearth, and at every crack occasioned by the bursting of the bands, the merry guests gave loud hurrahs and quaffed their generous ale: the old year thus departed under a fire of satisfaction, and the new year was ushered in by merry faces and grate-

ful hearts. It was a sort of thanksgiving for favours received—an acknowledgment to Providence with a cheerful countenance of all the blessings which had been bestowed; and far, far better is it thus cheerfully to offer up thanks than, with long, lank, straight hair, to *whine* over the calamities and miseries of existence—to believe merriment a sin and recreation a misdemeanour. Sir Hector was in high force that night; he had persuaded old Mr. Hammerton to allow Amelia to join in the amusement. The worthy old man never quitted his young charge for a moment, and as the various groups passed and remarked the beauty of the little affectionate girl, Sir Hector felt an inward satisfaction and looked upon her as he would have done upon a daughter. The evening passed, and the baronet returned, and the next morning at breakfast he found seated at his table old Mr. Hammerton and his silent interpreter Amelia. The common salutation having been performed, Mr. Hammerton at once began—

“I have received a letter from Frederic, Sir Hector, and it contains a description of his miraculous escape from the dangers and difficulties by which he was surrounded.”

“What!” interrupted Sir Hector, “an action, I suppose? Victorious of course? the navy, thank Heaven, are seldom defeated.”

“Not so, Sir Hector,—worse, ten thousandfold worse.”

“Is my son safe?” interrupted the baronet; “for there was a rumour of the loss of the Tribune afloat, but so garbled and so contradictory that no one believed it.”

“Yes; he is safe. But in saving his life, Frederic nearly lost his own. You had better hear the letter.”

Sir Hector manifested a little impatience; and old Hammerton read the account of the boat, with the danger and deprivations neither heightened nor abbreviated, but a plain straight-forward narrative of that which has already been related, and it terminated thus—

“In all my sufferings, dearest father, I thought of you and of Amelia: I knew that my death would rob you of your only prop, and Amelia of her only safeguard. I never lifted up my prayers for my own safety without eagerly soliciting that God would endow you with sufficient fortitude to bear up against the calamity should it please him to shorten my days. My prayer has been heard; I am yet alive and able, I trust, to work for your maintenance. The first money I can gain shall be transmitted to you; although

I confess at this moment I see but little chance of earning more than is absolutely necessary for my subsistence. For the present I must remain in this small village, situated on the banks of St. James's River, in the Chesapeake. I had anticipated landing at New York, but we were driven off the coast in a gale and ultimately reached this place. Do not grieve that I am without money, or indeed without raiment; I am spared to you, and I am grateful that I am thus enabled to hope that I may contribute to lighten the load under which you have so long groaned. I shall work my way to England if I can fall in with some English man-of-war and find some unexpected assistance. I am grateful for the misfortunes I have undergone, as they will teach me hereafter, should chance plunge me into difficulties, not to despair when danger looks the most dreadful, or give up life without a struggle to preserve it. The hand—the bountiful hand of Providence, which has sustained me in this trial, may yet guide and direct me safely to you; and that I may one day be blessed with your blessing, and again see my own dear affectionate mother and sister, is the unceasing prayer of your ever-dutiful son.

“P.S.—I hope young Murray will continue to do and to improve as he did before he slipped overboard. He is a bold, daring, desperate youngster, with one or two little failings which time and a midshipman's berth will rub off: he is a rough diamond; but rely upon it he will never disgrace his name if chance should throw the Tribune alongside of a force double her strength. I forgot to mention that it was in endeavouring to save the lives of others that he fell overboard himself. It happened on my dear little Amelia's birthday.”

“Strange are the ways of Providence, and short-sighted indeed is man! You remember, Hammerton,” continued Sir Hector, “that on that very day when your son was thus left to the winds and the waves, we were drinking his health and imploring God to protect him.”

“You may rely upon it, Sir Hector,” answered Hammerton, “that this meeting of the American ship was the means predestined to save him.”

“A fiddlestick, Hammerton!—predestined indeed! Then why did not the first ship save them?”

“Because it was ordained,” replied the staunch old man,

"that the crew were to be starved and die. You may laugh, Sir Hector, but nothing can shake my faith : I am certain in my own mind that nothing is the effect of chance—everything is ordained, and we walk blindly into the snare we cannot avoid."

"I wonder, Hammerton, would you think so if a man was busily employed cutting your throat with a blunt knife?"

"Certainly I should, Sir Hector; and I should hope that the man enjoying the high situation of finisher of the law would have been predestined to exercise his art upon the murderer. But tell me, sir, have you any tidings of the Tribune?"

"There are reports by hundreds : one, that she was wrecked in Halifax ; another, that she was blown in the gale off Bermuda and there signaled ; others, that she was seen going into harbour with her number flying ; another, that she had fallen in with a French frigate, and having been dismasted and left a wreck, was seen under jury-mast standing towards the Azores ; but as no two accounts agree, I am quite prepared to believe that the ship is safe enough, and only wish the accident-manufacturers of the newspapers would find some other vessel to lose besides the only one in the navy in which I am personally interested. I was about to remark upon your son's letter. He seems inclined to come home ; I think it is a pity he did not endeavour to get to Halifax ; he might work his way up to New York, and thence he might reach his own ship."

"His poverty, and not his will, consents to the steps he is about to take ;—it certainly would have been the wisest plan, one would have supposed, to have done so."

"I wrote to your son, Hammerton," continued Sir Hector, "and I took care not to make the letter merely one of advice. Now, indeed, I could have wished him to have received that letter ; for, to tell you the truth, I wrote it on little Amelia's birth-day, and I sent him a trifling present to let him know the interest I took in my little favourite, and that he participated in my best wishes."

"You have, my dear Sir Hector, placed us all under a load of obligations which we can never return, excepting by a grateful remembrance of them : and now I leave you Frederic's letter to scan over at your leisure, and by the aid of charts and newspapers to make out the situation of the Tribune."

CHAPTER XIV.

Letters home.—Pranks at Halifax.—Love and Predestination.

THE post arrived at Sir Hector Murray's country mansion about half-past one in the day, bringing him two letters; and with the post came always that provision for half-starved garrisons—that comfort of each man's life—that cheapest of luxuries—the newspaper. Sir Hector was seated by his library fire waiting for the tide of novelty which sweeps through the long columns of the papers, taking us from times past to time present, filling the noddles of noodles with conversation to be drawn forth at that day's dinner, circulating scandal, reviling political opponents, and giving the true history of the times, its bearings, opinions and changes. While Benjamin, who was much too good a servant to hand his old master a rheumatism in a wet newspaper, aired the sheet, Sir Hector opened one letter. This was from the person in charge of his house in Grosvenor-square, merely mentioning that two or three unknown individuals had mistaken Sir Hector's house for their own, and had, with all the right of the master, appropriated sundry pieces of furniture to their own use; had examined the cellar, and relieved one or two of the chimney-pieces from the weight of candelabras and clocks; and, in fact, had taken the very questionable liberty of converting the property of Sir Hector to their own uses.

Benjamin shrugged up his old shoulders, and congratulated his master upon the good fortune of having removed the most valuable articles; and, upon the principle of a clumsy nursery maid, who lets all the crockery of the little people down stairs by the run, only saving a cracked slop-basin, and then declares that "*for a breakage it was a most fortunate affair,*" Benjamin argued that *for a robbery it was the very best which could have occurred*, and that Sir Hector ought, under the circumstances of the case, to consider himself uncommonly fortunate. Sir Hector rather differed from

his old friend ; and as, with a little more petulance than he usually exhibited, he snatched the paper, he said, "Misfortunes never come alone, Benjamin."

"No, sir," replied the old fellow, "that's true enough ; for when I married my second wife, who was a lady's maid, I found that I had three daughters to provide for."

"Ah," replied Sir Hector, "in that case you were not singular. See if you can make out this wretched scrawl, and give an intelligible list of the loss." Saying which, he placed his spectacles on their proper resting-place, for previously they had been pointed to Heaven like a pair of Herschel's telescopes, and he ran his eye over the leading articles of the Times. A larger type attracted him, and there he read, 'Melancholy loss of the Tribune—Authentic Account.' Sir Hector gazed almost breathlessly at the paper and read the following narrative.

"It is this day our melancholy duty to detail to our readers one of the most frightful shipwrecks which it has been our painful lot ever to circulate. The public are aware that some vague accounts of such an event have reached this country ; but so very confused was the statement, and so serious might have been the consequences to the numerous friends of the unhappy ships' company, that we merely adverted to the report, and mentioned it as wanting confirmation. We sincerely wish we could now say that the present information required the same attestation : the fact is beyond dispute, and the public will read the horrid narrative with the feelings of sympathy and regret which we have felt in thus giving it publicity."

Sir Hector drew breath feebly, the blood had left his lips, and his whole frame was seriously agitated ; but he read it all—hurriedly, yet not a word escaped him ; the paragraph finished thus :

"Of all the officers and crew of this unfortunate vessel only eight have been saved, two midshipmen and six seamen ; and we sincerely regret, for the consolation of those who are most interested in this awful calamity, that we are unable to give the names of the survivors. The report was brought by a schooner from Halifax, which, in consequence of the sudden change of wind, was enabled to put to sea on the evening of the 17th, the wreck having taken place on the night previously. The whole account is past a doubt ; for the captain of the schooner has assured us that he saw the

At the bottom of this was written "Walter:" the "M" had been begun, but Murray had been too exhausted to finish it.

Strange that the excess of joy should have more effect upon the mind than that of grief! Strange that men can bear calamities, cruelties, tortures, death, with unflinching eye and scarcely quivering lip,—that under the most aggravated circumstances the mind may be brought to fortify the man—that poverty succeeding to affluence can be looked upon with calmness and sometimes with contentment; but that the opposite extreme—that which we most wanted and least anticipated, the sudden acquisition of enormous wealth, the means whereby we are rescued from grovelling penury and lifted into ease and comfort—that which gives the power of gratifying revenge, exciting envy, causing jealousy—that any sudden flow of good fortune, should paralyze the brain, and but too frequently turn the sensible into maniacs! Sir Hector slowly recovered from his fainting, and eagerly asked for the letter. Amelia had forced her father to read it, and as he returned the welcome epistle, warmly congratulated the baronet upon the fortunate event; as the agitated old man read the letter again coolly and calmly, he soon became restored to his wonted energy; and after giving a striking illustration even in old age of the excessive folly of imagining evils before they are in sight, and of giving way to an enemy before he has made his attack, the friends parted, and the overjoyed old man nearly danced round his own table, to all intents and purposes mad with joy.

More strongly to contrast the character of Walter Murray with those of his protector and him who risked his life to save him, perhaps the publication of his letter to his father would be the best document. It was received a few days after the arrival of that which removed the doubts and fears of the father; and it ran thus:

"Halifax, 26th November.

"MY DEAR FATHER,—As Mr. Styles wrote to you the other day and told you I was safe, it's no use my entering into any details more than to confirm it. I was a little done, as they say; but I soon recovered when I got hold of the old gentleman's port wine. I am without clothes or money, and must get a refit upon tick; for I have no idea of being the son of a baronet and naked as a savage. Hammerton went

adrift in a boat some time ago, and in all probability is drowned, and no great loss either to us or to him; he had no money, and was as poor as a piper. The captain thought he might be saved by some of the convoy; but I think with the others, that the boat was capsized, if ever he reached it, and that all hands are snug enough in Davy Jones's locker. The last time I saw him, he was striking out hard for the boat, which was a long way to windward of him, and when the fog came on he must have been drowned. I am in the commissioner's house here: he is a good fellow enough, and draws his corks freely. He had me rubbed down with rough towels as if I had been a horse; and no sooner was I a little recovered than he talked of getting rid of me, and I am to join the *Surprise*, commanded by Captain Edward Hamilton: she is on the West India station, and as I rather like the service, having weathered the last gale, I shall be off to my new ship in the first vessel that sails.

"I received your letter and have pocketed the advice. Weazel was the only shipman saved besides myself: the devil always takes care of his own, and a neater nut for Old Nick to crack never got into a shell than Weazel. He was taken to a house where there were four women,—an old one and her three daughters: they were all very kind to him, and he pretended to be very much obliged to them. He soon got well: the salt water, as he said, 'preserved' him, for he was a nice pickle. Well, there he remained for about a week, eating and drinking, and spending all the money these fools gave him; and there he might have remained until now, if his godfather, the devil, had not got to work at him, and put him up to some of his usual tricks. The two youngest daughters, girls about sixteen or seventeen, all made up of combs and curls, both fell in love with this weed taken off the rocks, and he thought he would repay their love after his fashion: so the first thing he does is to dress up a bolster with a black mask and nightcap on its head, and clap it up in the young ladies' bed; and before they went to roost he told them long yarns about murders in the West Indies, and of the strange look of a negro who had that day been near the house asking for charity. The old woman was in a dreadful fright, and believed that the poor black was likely to walk off with one of her daughters and murder herself, and she went to bed shaking all over like a chicken in a shower. The young girls undressed in their mother's room,

while Weazel was watching for the result. No sooner had the little loves got into their own apartment, than they proceeded to take a last look at their pretty faces in the glass which stood opposite the bed; and in that they beheld the face of the negro very comfortably ensconced in their bed. They could not stir, but with one consent gave a tremendous scream. The old lady ran to see what was the matter, rushing in very thinly clad; and seeing her daughters as pale as death, looking in the glass, she ran to it and beheld the horrid blackamoor staring at them; and such a scream as they all set up together! Weazel crept into the room, and pinching the old lady by the heel, began to bark like a dog. The scene which followed baffles all description: the old lady fainted, the girls went into hysterics, and Weazel was found endeavouring to restore animation to the little curly-pated Rosette, laughing and giggling at the mischief he had created. He was told to depart the next day. This annoyed him; so after placing a broom upright with a basin of water on the top of it against the drawing-room door, he gave a rap. 'Come in,' said one of the girls. No answer, but another rap followed; up jumped the eldest girl to open the door, when smack came basin and broom on her head, drenching her with water, spoiling the carpet, and frightening the old lady. Before he left the house and got despatched to join the Arethusa, he cut off the best ringlet of Rosette's hair, clapped some cobbler's wax in the shoes of the old lady, pinned the eldest and number two together, tied a squib to the cat's tail, and set the dog adrift with a bundle of crackers to his stern. He was worth a hundred Hammertons—lazy fellows who do nothing but their duty, without any fun or frolic about them.

"I must conclude this long letter, as I have to get my new rigging over my mast-head. I have drawn a bill upon you, and once more I am quite recovered and well. And am,

"Your dutiful son,

"WALTER MURRAY."

Not one word throughout this long rambling letter was there of grateful acknowledgment to a parent for all his former kindness—not one syllable of filial affection—not one sentence praying that the good old baronet might not have received the intelligence of the shipwreck before Styles's

letter removed any fear or apprehension he might have entertained concerning his son's safety. There was nothing but unfeeling egotism, ungrateful remarks, hatred and rancour, against the man who tried to save him, and a chuckling satisfaction at the mischievous pranks of Weazel.

And yet there was a good point, one rather of omission than commission: it made no mention whatever of the gallant conduct of Walter when he refused to be saved, placing his nearly dying messmate in the boat; it launched into no self commendation; nor did it convey to his father one idea of the manner in which Walter had been received in Halifax in consequence of the circulation of the intelligence of his gallant and exemplary behaviour. Still the worst part of his character, ingratitude, was fully developed: he had never tried to ascertain the boy's name who first pushed off to save him—he never mentioned the brave act which would have placed the lad for ever on the pension list of Sir Hector. If the bad parts were developed, the good were concealed; and had all been known, the father might have found a balance in favour of his son, instead of contrasting it with the former letter of Hammerton, so little filled with himself, and so much—so kindly warmed by the affectionate spirit which breathed throughout it.

Frequent conversations passed between the two parents on this head; the one groaning over the calamity of having a son (whom he yet tenderly loved) with such an ill-regulated mind to inherit great wealth; and the other, convinced that in whatever station of life Frederic might be placed, his steady adherence to his duty, his untiring spirit, his religion, would support him through all difficulties, and ultimately obtain for him the respect of the world, even if they failed to give him its riches. Over and over again did old Hammerton recapitulate his doctrine of predestination; and just as often did Sir Hector overthrow the flimsy creed, by reasoning upon its fallacy. In the mean time, the friendship became gradually more closely cemented: Amelia was more caressed—even called an adopted daughter; and bright and sparkling were the young eyes of this little beauty as she listened to the arguments of the old people, her little fingers, lips, and eyes all moving together as she conveyed Sir Hector's meaning without a mistake, and listened to her father's answers. She of course believed as did her father; and had already been heard to say, "If it's predestined that Frederic

is to return, return he will: or if it was arranged that I am to marry old Sir Hector, why I suppose I should do it, although I am only twelve and he nearly seventy." If beauty could increase like a flower, to blossom and to fade in a year, perhaps Amelia might have been the unenvied plant; but she grew more gradually, not hastening into bud to fade in its bloom, but slowly progressing towards a perfection of feature in which talent and vivacity embellished the rose and the lily.

CHAPTER XV.

Promotion at Jamaica.—A Doctor doctored.—Debauch on board, and death on shore.

THE commissioner of Halifax soon discovered all the bad propensities of Walter; he well knew that there was no school to correct or tame a wild boy like a midshipman's berth; and that where bravery was known, or where a reckless disregard for danger existed, it was on board a man-of-war they were most esteemed, and properly watched and rewarded. Having in his early life been acquainted slightly with Sir Hector Murray, and having been very favourably impressed with the character of Walter, he resolved to serve him according to his power; for all his little failings were lost in the blaze of his splendid behaviour in the Tribune, which lost none of its colour from the circumstance that Galvin, Munroe, and Dunlap came and requested the favour of shaking hands with him once more before they were drafted into different ships, and expressed a hope that at some future time they might again be under the command of one who, in the greatest danger, and with hope actually fast to the side, cut adrift the painter, and remained to die in order to save his messmate.

Sailors never forget these things. Trifling errors they call "being a little scampish;" but the word scamp on board a ship, either in the cockpit or before the mast, does not carry with it the same bad meaning extended to it on shore. Let but a brave scamp beat up for volunteers, and every man in the ship will soon respond to the call: they care very little for some ungentlemanly debauchery,—the leader is brave and determined, and will never return them on board the subject of ridicule and contempt.

In the year 1799, the *Surprise*, a small frigate, was under the command of Captain Hamilton, an officer well known in those days for his daring exploits; and it was on board of

this frigate that Mr. Walter Murray was in future to exhibit his bravery. He was packed off in a gun-brig bound to Jamaica, having in his pocket the best part of Hammerton's fifty pounds, and a supply from the commissioner of all requisite articles; nor did he sail without some advice better than he occasionally got from home.

"You have done nobly, generously, manfully, Murray," said the commissioner as he extended his hand to him for the last time; "act always so—risk your own to save a messmate's life, and in the hour of danger you will find dozens by to protect you. A brave seaman never quits a brave officer, and mayhap you may experience *that* under your new commander. You go to him with a character that all your messmates will envy: young as you are, you will soon be placed in danger. I have no fear for the result; you will never disgrace your name before an enemy. Remember, I have written to Hamilton: he will expect much of you; he will watch you narrowly—he will censure you privately, and reward you publicly. God bless you! let me hear from you occasionally; but if you, like some youngsters, are afraid of writing to old captains, I will get a remembrance of you through another channel. I see the blue peter up, so away with you; and whenever you come back to Halifax, here you will find a home and a welcome as long as you uphold the credit of what I now know of Walter Murray."

Murray parted from his kind friend with real regret. In his society he had heard of daring deeds done in days gone by: he had seen the Battle of the Nile fought upon a mahogany-table; he had heard how enthusiastically, how generously, one naval officer could praise another, without the little bickerings of envy and jealousy; he had heard Nelson called "Britannia's watchword:" and as these stories were recounted, he vowed, if chance but offered, that he himself would emulate the fame of the hero of the Nile. If ever a heart beat high with hope—if ever a heart throbbed with determination, Walter Murray's was that heart; but he was true to his character to the last: although he had remained six weeks at the commissioner's, he never gave one of the servants a farthing; and quite unintentionally, as the commissioner said afterwards, when telling the anecdote—the dismal anecdote of the Tribune's loss—he left Halifax, having forgotten to pay for his washing, and leaving one or two bills to be presented for payment.

No sooner had the gun-brig cleared the harbour, than

Murray saw the cliffs on which the lazy vermin crawled when the boy pulled from Herring Cove; and then for the first time he thought he might have endeavoured, at least once, by the sacrifice of a trifling pleasure to find out the lad who had saved Weazel. But he soon rather rejoiced over his neglect; for he argued thus: "If I had found him, I should have mentioned him to my father: he is so confoundedly foolish about money, that he would have pensioned the boy; and when I came to the property, I should have a great deal of trouble to get rid of him. Better as it is. I have not been ungrateful, for he never saved *me*;" and Weazel, I dare say, has sent the lad's boat adrift with his favourite dog in it, or broken both his oars to prop up some shed in which he proposed to cut off the dog's tail by way of a joke."

Here he was interrupted in his sweet thoughts and gentle reminiscences by the officers of the brig asking him to point out the place where the frigate drifted and ultimately went to pieces. His memory was correct as to all particulars; it must have been a more dunderheaded lad than Murray to have forgotten what was so unpleasantly engraven on his mind: his account was vivid,—and his eye sparkled as he told the tale. "There it was we struck, close to that bluff point; and there, just by that sharp projecting hill, she fixed herself. There is Herring Cove, from which we first got assistance;—ay, and well I know that small round knob; there it was we saw many looking, but none offering aid."

Murray was a favourite in a moment; he volunteered to be placed in a watch; and when stationed on the forecastle at reefing topsails, he said respectfully. "I should prefer the foretop, if you please, sir."

"I wish we were going to keep you in the brig, youngster," replied the first lieutenant; "you are just the lad we want."

"I should have no objection to stay, if I were not already fixed for the Surprise."

Fifteen days saw him in the vilest hole on earth—Port Royal at Jamaica—of all places the most dreary, the most desolate. It is built (that is, the town) upon a low sandy point, projecting into the sea, the water being so deep that a lead-line may be dropped from the thin projection into seven fathoms water. It is here that a poor boy, the son of a Negro, was washing his feet, when a shark rushed at him, and before he could gather his legs up, one was carried away by

the voracious creature, the blood which followed the bite bringing about twenty more in pursuit of a similar treat. Beset on the sea-side by sharks, it has its rear adorned by the Palisades, a place on which—for it cannot be said in which—the victims of yellow fever are ultimately laid; the sandy soil being so near the limits of the water, that after digging a two-foot-deep grave, the water rushes in, and the place is shortly filled up: the coffins, therefore, are sometimes uncovered, and when, as is the case, putridity succeeds to life, and the cool land-breeze comes wafting the odours over the miserable remnants of a town, the inhabitants have no particular need to hail that breeze which in other parts of the island is most eagerly welcomed. Let no man say his life is safe for a day at Port Royal; the wholesale murderer, yellow fever, even as he walks, is stealthily sapping his best health, until it has fixed itself steadily and strongly upon its victim. A shivering fit at rising in the morning is the signal for the coming assault; and if the razor and the lancet, calomel and other vile means, be not speedily called in to aid the garrison, the outworks will be carried by noon, by sunset the mind will have surrendered, the victory will be secure, and by the dawn,—and here, as if in mockery of the human race, who toil to live, and live to toil, the opening day is more splendid than in any other part of the globe,—the poor beaten creature, once a man, but now a maniac, is at the last gasp; by noon on the second day he will be laid in his shell on the Palisades; and when the sun goes down, and the land-breeze comes on, his remembrance may be recalled in the vile miasma he has already contributed to generate. Here the young and the old, the sickly and the healthy, the rich and the poor, the sober and the drunken, are on a par: there is no premium upon good conduct; the tippler, the glutton, and the gambler,—he who walks out at noonday's heat, or lies exposed to the rays of the moon, is very nearly as secure as the careful, the prudent, the reserved,—he who walks only in the cool of the morning or evening, shuts out the cold air of night, and more carefully avoids the moon than the daylight.

"Beware of the evening dews," said the doctor of the brig to Murray as they approached this most beautiful island; "trust not to appearances—this is the fatal beauty which beams forth in all its attractions to entrap you; and like the eager fly which approaches the rich treat before it—disre-

garding the thin and almost imperceptible web which has been spun for its capture, it rushes into the mesh and the spider appears,—so is it here: lured by the great beauty of the island, young and inexperienced men walk in the noon-day heat to partake of the great feast Nature has prepared for them; they sit down to view the glorious sight, they rest after fatigues in apparent security; and the next day—there, there,” said he as he pointed to the thousand wooden remembrances of lost friendship, “behold the result! Where you see those negroes laying down their load—their daily load, there will the rash youth lie, and be forgotten in a moment—for death is no rarity here. Be prudent, Mr. Murray, avoid young rum, which is old poison; live temperately, moderately; rise early, go to bed early; and you may weather the Palisades.”

Three days after this good and wholesome advice, Murray being in want of some more linen, purchased the stock of the doctor, who, while adopting his own advice, proved the fallacy of human precautions,—for, before that time, he was carried by the negroes he had pointed out to the Palisades.

“A good medico, in truth,” said Murray to himself; “he pointed out the danger he could not avoid; and since temperance is thus rewarded, perhaps the other extreme might be as bad. I shall walk in the middle path—live as usual, fatigue myself only when my duty requires it—live neither too riotously, nor too abstemiously—take the good things when they are offered,—one may drink any *given* quantity. I shall never think of the fever, and shall say with some truth, ‘Sufficient for the day be the evil thereof.’ Half the dead have frightened themselves into the fever, and the other half have starved or drunk themselves into it. Precaution is better than cure; but here precaution appears useless, and I shall swim with the tide in the best manner I can.”

It happened that his new ship, the *Surprise*, was at sea when the brig anchored, and Murray was drafted on board the *Shark*, the guard ship, (and never was there a more appropriate name for such a reservoir as that,) to await her arrival. He was welcomed, for he could not displace any of the older midshipmen who were feeding upon rum, vegetable marrow, and hope. The cup which held the last was too often dashed from their lips when it appeared brimming with the sparkles of life. Some, after years and years of active

service, had been placed upon the commander-in-chief's list and kept in the Shark to leap into a commission; but before death could take a lieutenant or a captain, Sir Hyde Parker had a cargo of young sprigs of nobility sent out to fill the first vacancies: and thus year after year would pass, the commission always apparently within grasp, yet invariably eluding the touch. These men, soured by disappointment, formed the laudable design of killing every lieutenant they could catch, not with a dagger, but with a poisoned bowl. The victim was asked to dinner—new rum, strong unhealthy port, villanous rubbish called claret, heavy porter, from the store of offe John Ferrong, of most notorious memory; whilst smoking, raw nips, punch, wine, milk, beer, sangaree, lemonade, and cup; filled up the stomach of iniquity, and the yellow fever stepped conveniently in to prevent inquiries.

It was amongst a host of such men that Walter Murray, bearing the stamp and impress of a gentleman, was welcomed as he mounted the sides of the Shark. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, and the midshipmen, the oldsters, had obtained leave to dine at five, when the heat of the day would have somewhat passed, in order to welcome a young lieutenant just come out on the station, with red hair, a thin skin, and every circumstance favourable to the impression of the sun, or its equal in heat and fire—new rum. He had been at sea under one of the oldsters; at which time the new lieutenant was thirteen, and the oldster twenty. Now the ages had advanced; the one being nineteen, the other twenty-six; the one having risen in the service, the other having suffered from "hope deferred;" the one all elated with his prospects, the other soured by past events, having been wounded three times, mentioned in the Gazette twice, but still a midshipman; whilst the lad who came to sea under his guidance, had passed him, and now heard this very oldster order the boatswain's mate to attend the side for him.

This is one of the many miseries a man may experience in the navy, and be saved in the marines. In the latter no slip of a noble stook can jump over his head, no wealth purchase above him; each man takes his turn at dangers and difficulties, and rises slowly but surely when his time arrives;—there is some consolation, but very little hope, in the Royal Marines.

The young lieutenant and his old shipmate shook hands

cordially; the one evidently extending his with a little condescension, the other receiving it with a slight diffidence. This always occurs in a difference of rank in the navy, and may be traced even in the admiral and old captain.

The stranger was taken below into the gun-room of the *Shark*; and Murray witnessed the eager looks of the other midshipmen, who were calculating how long it would be before they entombed their victim and stepped into the death vacancy.

"He will be soon done," said one.

"I think so," replied one of the name of Douglas; "but we must not make him drunk too soon, we must let him take a good quantity—and an unwholesome mixture."

"Old Oliver," said another, "has got him nicely in tow there, about some '*glorious fun*' they had in Portsmouth. If we can but get him to lie out upon the logs, just leave the moon and the dew to do the rest."

"Let's do it like gentlemen," said the first speaker, who was the oldest of the party, and, according to all accounts, the second on the admiral's list. "That cursed packet will be in before the week's out, and then we shall have some other honourable villain to rob us of our due."

"If he weathers the Palisades between this and Friday, I'm a Dutchman, and the devil's a beggar."

"Come, lads," said Oliver, "dinner's ready. Let me introduce you to Mr. Abbot, a luckier dog than any of us, but a right good fellow, and therefore we can bear having the 'go-by' given us by him. Sit the larboard side, Abbot: when this sea-breeze they call 'the doctor' dies away, the ship will ride with her stern to the Palisades, and you will get the land-breeze in your face. You always know a Johnny Newcome by his getting his back to the breeze.—Sit down, youngster: what's your name?"

"Walter Murray," replied the boy.

"D—n it! you answer as if you were a lord. Walter Murray indeed! service is come to a pretty pass when a youngster has such a mouthful of names as that! 'Bring yourself to anchor!—sit over the starboard side!—there's no breeze which blows that can blow any good out of you just yet!—Boy, take this soup to Mr. Abbot!—make a long arm, youngster!—you must learn to sit on your thumb, and think that a broad seat!—What kind of a craft is that old ship you came out in?'"

"Good enough," replied Abbot.

"Are there any of the officers sick on board of her," asked the impatient Douglas.

"No," replied Abbot: "the captain looked rather bilious the other day, but he is all right again."

"Is he a young man?" asked Oliver: "I mean a man about thirty?"

"No," was the answer; "I should judge him a lucky fellow of about five-and-twenty."

"I wonder if he knows any of the lieutenants?" said the oldest bird of this raven's nest of destroyers.—"Abbot, take a glass of wine: here's some sherry—hand here your glass!—No half-laughs and purser's grins here; fill it up with the rose in the middle for old acquaintance' sake. Here's your health, and next step to you soon! It's devilish hot; let's douse our jackets and take to it comfortably."

"Mr. Abbot," said Douglas, "may I have the pleasure of drinking wine with you? Here's some claret, not so hot and fiery as that sherry."

Abbot swallowed the newly-imported stuff from St. Jago de Cuba, bought at Johnny Ferrong's,—or rather borrowed, under the solemn asseveration that it was taken out of a vessel from Bordeaux, which had been captured, and her cargo sold at Kingston.

"Pray, sir," said Murray with all the pertness of a spoiled boy, and all the manner of one who felt himself likely to give the 'go-by' to all present, addressing himself to Mr. Abbot, "have you a good stock of linen?"

The question astonished all hands; but Abbot, who with his coat had dropped his rank, looked at his shirt-sleeves and answered, "Pretty well for that, I think, youngster; but why do you ask?"

"Because if you go on as you are going on now, you will be by the day after to-morrow alongside of the doctor of the brig, who came in here a week ago in health and is now *there*;" (as he said this, he pointed out of the stern windows, the ship having swung, and the Palisades being close on board of her;) "and I bought his shirts."

This produced a shout of laughter, and its proportionate ridicule from Abbot, who declared the doctor must have pre-disposed himself to fever from the fright he was in when he rounded the low point, and then added, "By Jove, it's too

hot to laugh in this climate! What have you got to drink, Oliver?"

"Capital ale—right good wholesome stuff,—none of your negro-boiled porter, or your stewed donkeys fermented, but right good Fermoy, made the better by keeping down the bubbles by a glass of brandy. I'll show you how we manage it here.—Boy! bring the bottle here! Why, you cuckoo! you have not drawn the cork. Now, Abbot," said he, "pop this glass of brandy into the tumbler, and drink it of at once.—That's well done!—don't you think the brandy improves it?"

"I think it does," said the foolish young man, "but it tastes very much like rum, and very strong too."

"Why, you spalpeen of the devil!" said Douglas, looking at the boy, "you have put the old Jamaica on the table!—take it off and bring the brandy."

Abbot was now reeking at every pore, thirsty of course, and was persuaded by Douglas to try some cider, with some sherry in it, just to correct the acidity. The dinner was done, the cloth removed—conversation all alive, principally about promotions, cuttings out, dashing actions, and comfortable stations. In the mean time the land-breeze began slightly to stir the surface of the water: Abbot had thrown his waistcoat open, and the cold damp struck back upon his chest, delightful to feel, but fatal to experience.

In the *Shark* the midshipmen might smoke or do any thing else they pleased,—and they did please to smoke and drink—both. The wine was now put aside for grog; and although Abbot manifested some signs of coming inebriation in the thickness of his utterance, and the devil-may-care manner in which he handled the bottle, yet some of the more knowing ones saw that if he went on at the pace he was going, he would soon be rather too hazy to undertake a quiet excursion on shore, this being the *coup de grace*. The victim, after being walked or reeled about until he can no longer stand, is left without a hat on one of the logs near the shore, and "the moon and the dew do their duty."

Murray saw what was going on, and he guessed that the doctor's advice was well worth following: he took only water, and this enabled him to see the end of the tragedy; for had he drunk brandy, the fork would have been stuck in the table, and he bundled off to his hammock. Oliver proposed a song: he sang a good one himself, and therefore

having proposed it, and being able to do it, he set the example, and sang the following, all hands joining in respectable chorus, while Douglas occasionally poured a few drops of new rum—the bottle stood by him—into the sangaree of Abbot.

“When the world was first made, all was order, we know,
 Until Admiral Noah took a cruise in the ark;
 He had a strange crew to trim sails in a blow,
 But he sailed, without compass to steer in the dark.
 If to north, south, or west, 'twas no moment to him;
 For who could make land when of land there was none?
 He drifted about as it suited his whim,
 And the jolly old admiral revell'd in fun.

When he turn'd out at daylight,—he never slept late,
 His daughters and sons took the scrub-brooms in hand;
 And they fagg'd and they toil'd, but they never once ate
 Of the pairs of provisions which came from the land.
 They had ducks, geese, and sheep, with a lion or two;
 Cameleopards, with other large drones;
 An elephant also, to clap in a stew,
 With a rather thin donkey to make some broil'd bones.

Now we are much wiser than Noah, my boys;
 We eat and we drink of the good things on board;
 Not a duck or a goose his existence enjoys,
 But a savoury stew he may also afford.
 Let us live while we can, let us love whilst we may,
 For the slight breath of life in a moment is past;
 Seize the hour which is *now*, make the best of the day,
 And a fig for the cloud which may evening o'ercast.”

“Bravo!” said Douglas, “Hurrah for the present time,
 and the devil run a-hunting with the future! Fill up, Mr.
 Abbot; here's Oliver's good health and song, and it's

“A very good song, and it's very well sung,
 Jolly companions every one.
 Put on your hats, and keep your heads warm;
 A little more liquor will do us no harm.”

“Ah!” sighed Murray, for he had got a little of his own
 good sense for his guide, “that chorus is not like Parr's
 maxim of health, ‘Keep your head cool by temperance, your

feet warm by exercise; never eat but when hungry, nor drink but when dry."

"Hulloa!" said Douglas, "why, we have got a parson on board, rigged out like a boy of the first class. I dare say you know all about Noah and his ark; now can you tell where he made the land?"

"I know," replied Murray, as he looked Abbot full in the face, "where he will make the land."

"Do you think so really?" said Douglas, his face sparkling with animation and rum, as he heard the youngster predict what he most wished realised. And so it is,—words which would have been regarded with contempt from one so young, if differing from his wishes, were treasured up as a prophecy by Douglas, who looked at that evening's work as his release from the heavy burthen he had so many years carried.

"I call," said Oliver, "upon Douglas for a song."

"Bravo! bravo!" resounded. "Come, Douglas, clear your whistle, get the huskiness of the Kingston sand out of your throat, and give us 'The Shark's Prayer.'"

If any thing could have startled Abbot, it would have been this song; but he was wound up to meet all the evils which flesh is heir to without flinching; his face was crimson with heat, and he mopped away the perspiration, whilst those long inured to the villanous climate scarcely (to use a familiar expression) 'turned a hair.' The cry was "Douglas!" the president beat the table, and this lieutenant in expectation gave forth the following song, in a deep, clear voice, his spirit warming with the subject, and his voice gradually increasing in the chorus.

"Saturday night was the sailor's delight,
When they sang of their love, or described the fierce fight.
It's in England, or far, far away from this spot,
That this song of the seaman is never forgot.
But who in this climate of sickness and sorrow
Shall dare to look forth for the light of to-morrow?

Hark! hark! to the prayer of the Shark:

Promotion's uncertain, our prospects are dark ;
 Our toast shall be DEATH, though it savours of treason ;
 And this is the prayer of the mids of the Shark—
 For a bloody war, and a sickly season.

Hurrah ! hurrah !

Near and far,

For a bloody war and a sickly season.

What's life but an ocean of strife,
 For ambition, promotion, another man's wife ?
 Who cares for the living placed over our head ?
 'Tis a world full of cares, and the bless'd are the dead.
 The captain's last sigh, though in madness it be,
 Or his groans, would make music the sweetest to me.
 Hark ! hark, &c.

What's death but the stoppage of breath,
 And a rather damp bed in the ground underneath ?
 The best friend we have is the quick yellow fever,
 And the first toast we drink is 'Promotion for ever !'
 Let them die who're above us, and, bless'd in repose,
 Their troubles all ended, we'll step in their shoes.
 Hark ! hark, &c." *

It is needless to add, that the toast was drunk even by Abbot in a brimmer, for although it was partially directed at him, yet he had to move up the ladder, and in his delirium of drunkenness he would not have cried if the man on the step above him slipped off in a hurry.

Again was the glass filled and emptied ; and now the red eye of drunkenness was fixed in stupid gaze, then came indecent songs, revellings, cursings, complaints of prospects blighted, in almost inarticulate language ; and as the relater of his woes dashed his hand on the table, the tears rolled down his face, the glasses danced before and-around him.

There sat systematic drunkenness, a kind of unmeaning smile upon his lips, his eyes scarcely human, muttering to himself the last words of the song, they being what he really most wished and best remembered. By his side was

* This toast was drunk every day by the midshipmen of the Shark ; and I remember a certain officer saying, when he heard that the man was dead whose vacancy he got, "His dying groans would have been music to my ear."

sullen indifference rolling upon his chair; if brandy or water went into his mouth, he could not distinguish the difference. By him again was delicate sensibility moistened in tears,—a man crying drunk, his mouth unable to contain the fluid which, like an infant's dribbles, oozed through his lips. On his right was frantic intemperance, quarrelling with all, but noticed by none; and as he rose higher and higher in his blasphemy, his laughing drunk-companion was pouring the grog intended for his victim's mouth down the collar of his shirt.

Murray eyed it all; and the lesson—the Spartan lesson of making their slaves drunk—was not lost upon him; he became an attentive witness of the danger of drunkenness.—The man who had treasured the secret in his breast with religious caution, now blabbed it forth; he who was rigid in his duty, now scoffed at discipline; the silent found an incoherent tongue, the coward became the bravest of the brave, the mildest and most modest was now the fiercest and the most indecent. In the midst of all this, the principal object was not to be neglected: Abbot was considered sufficiently primed—it was proposed to go on shore, the party having prudently got permission before-hand. The boat was manned, and Murray saw the victim wreathed, filleted and ready for slaughter. They landed; the billiard-room was lighted, Johnny's store was assailed, doors were forced open, the poor negro as he hurried past was abused or pelted, and Abbot, after a dreary and tiresome walk round that precious sink of iniquity, was left by his guide Oliver without his hat to sleep upon the damp logs whilst the others, accustomed to such scenes, traversed the dirty town without a guide, reached the boat, returned on board, and tumbling into their hammocks, wallowed in their sleep.

The morning sun rose upon Abbot; the cold creeping shiver attacked him, his head was nearly splitting with that dreadful ache which is one of the penalties of debauchery. He walked towards Ferrong's to get a hat; he reached the door, and again attacked by his fierce enemy the fever, he became giddy and fell down. Assistance was soon at hand; he was removed to the hospital, bled, blistered, physicked.

On the other hand, the jovial companions of his last night's frolics rose with unsteady hands, and with perhaps that settled red of the tippler on their cheeks which ignorance might pronounce emblematic of health, and *they* felt but little an-

nayed by their intemperance. The news was quickly conveyed on board of Abbot's fate: he was raving mad in the hospital. In his lucid intervals he called frequently and loudly upon Oliver, his best—his earliest friend; and now feeling that his fate was approaching, the secret which he had hoarded in his bosom struggled to get loose. He implored to see his old messmate; and as he refused to take any medicine until he had been gratified, a request was sent to Oliver to repair to the hospital; and that worthy, as he stepped with Murray over the side, said in a laughing tone, "You may buy his shirts after to-morrow."

CHAPTER XVI.

Abbot's death-scene.—Confession of love and seduction.

"Now," said Oliver, as Murray and himself landed at Port Royal,—“Now you shall see a scene which snivelling cowards call dreadful, but which custom has reconciled to me. It's only the death of another man; and perhaps, as you are on this station, you may as well see all its horrors at once and get reconciled to them: you may yet live to hear the Shark's Prayer with more glee than you seemed to relish it last night.”

“I never wish to hear it again,” said Murray: “I knew how certainly it would finish your victim. Why, I saw you,—you need not start, for *I* was sober,—I saw you fill his glass to the brim with the raw new rum, whilst you helped yourself from a bottle which had brandy and water in it.”

“Stuff, youngster, stuff! I am perhaps more seasoned to it than he was; but as to drinking, you know, especially when we run a tilt against death, that is always done fairly and above-board: besides, we consider the Shark's Prayer as a bond of honour—we never flinch from that toast.”

“It's a villainous toast,” replied Murray with much animation, “and the wretch who composed the song is only rivalled by the barbarian who gave the toast.”

“I will take the liberty, Mr. Walter Murray, to tell you that your ears are in sad jeopardy, and that a donkey's will be shorter than yours by two inches, if you do not take a reef in your tongue and let one out in your manners.”

“I am not much afraid of my ears, Mr. Oliver,” replied the lad. “I have seen enough of men to know that those who talk most do least; and if that poor fellow dies—”

“Die!” interrupted Oliver; “why, is there any doubt of it? He had black vomit this morning; and, by Jupiter! in spite of all the Spanish nonsense of lemon and oil as a cure, no man ever yet digested in his waistcoat when the coats of

his stomach were mortified. He is off to a dead certainty ; and if the sea-breeze, which, confound it ! is freshening fast, would only take breath to-day in the shape of a calm, to-morrow I should be a lieutenant in a death vacancy, and others might sing the Shark's Prayer for me—unless indeed some captain was inclined to dine with me after I had served my time."

"This poor fellow has sent for you, as his best friend, to bear some tidings of his fate to his poor old father or mother ; and how can you sit by his sick-bed and hear his last wishes without feeling that you are the author of his misfortunes ?"

"What a young ass you are, Murray ! I am his best friend. This world is a world of wo, as the song says, and he is the happiest man who is freed from wo."

"Now," interrupted Murray, "are you going to this poor fellow's bed-side actually wishing to see, if possible, his last shiver, or to hear his last word ?"

"I should be better pleased," said Oliver, "to hear that he was dead already ; for all these long-winded yarns of dying men are very troublesome, especially where no swivel is allowed, and where one is interrupted by continued ravings of other people who take a sad long time to die."

By this time they had arrived at the hospital ; and Oliver, who mentioned his name, said he came in consequence of Mr. Abbot wishing to see him before he died. He told Murray to follow him, and the youngster, as if determined to face any scene however dreadful, wound up his courage to the sticking-post and entered the ward in which lay Abbot. He was not the only patient, for a bed nearly opposite his was also tenanted.

Oliver said, as he pointed to it, "It is only a pursuer who is going to pass muster aloft. No one cares a fig about him afloat : some of the clerks at the Admiral's office will get the vacancy. He ought to have been dead a week past ; but the devil is certain of him, and therefore is in no particular hurry."

"Ah, Oliver," said Abbot, "that is a good fellow : come near me : you are not afraid of this cursed fever, I know."

Murray, as he looked, could hardly recognise the man to whom he had given the friendly hint. Abbot saw him and turned away his head as he looked at Oliver, and pointing at Murray, said, "He is come for my shirts."

Murray sat down at some distance, and was not an idle spectator of the scene which followed.

"You look ill," said Oliver, "my dear fellow. I see they have shaved your head and bled you down to weakness; but I hear you are better than you were in the morning."

"Better, Oliver!" replied the desponding Abbot; "I fear I never shall be better! This morning I was ill—very ill, and am now so weak that I can scarcely hold my head up: and that poor fellow opposite has been dreadfully raving all day; the black nurse says he is sure to die, for he has had the black vomit: it is not a very comfortable idea to be stretched out by such creatures." Here Abbot stopped speaking, and his opposite neighbour commenced an incoherent speech: he was too weak to move, but his words came audibly enough.

"Then I won't stand it any longer!" began the purser. "If the youngsters amuse themselves kicking my lanterns about the tiers, I'll make it up in tobacco. What's the use of keeping books if we can't add a pound or two to a friend's account?—dead men eat just as much as we do, and they don't see quite so well.—Let's have a little more wine, Joe: prize-money will soon come in, and candle-boxes are cheap.—Those are queer chaps on board the Shark; they drink to *Death* every night when they can get a new-comer to dine with them. That old fellow Oliver has killed a score, and will have plenty more flats in his net: if the admiral would but promote him, the negroes would have a holiday at the Palisades, and a red-haired man have a fair chance."

Abbot, who was listening to this incoherent speech, seized Oliver by the hand and fixed his eyes upon him. "See, Oliver," he began, "how even in madness a man may be condemned! That toast last night—it frightens me now to drink as we did to *Death*!"

"Stuff, my dear fellow—don't think of it! As long as the Shark swims, the old custom will be kept up. Never mind the mad purser—you can tell me what you have to say *now*."

"I suppose you think that shortly I shall be as bad as he is?"

"Not I; you are much too fine a fellow to yield to this rascally fever. I remember, when I had it, we had four midshipmen all raving mad,—you know you always go mad before you die,—and they kicked up as much row as if the

devil had broken loose. Never mind the mad purser; he will be off soon, for I hear the rattles distinctly."

"O that I had never left England!" said Abbot: "I might have married her—I might have been a happy man! But here I thought promotion quicker, and am myself the most likely to forward it; (Oliver looked towards the sea;) here, more dreadful than the real thing, may I see what must be my fate. Madness—those rattles—left alone to die, or only watched by a negro: this is dreadful!—But all, Oliver—all do not die."

"No," replied Oliver, "not *all*; but you know the chance is not considered favourable. I speak to you as a man, not like a youngster. Of course you know that when a man gets the black vomit it is all over,—he may linger a day, but can't recover; and therefore it behoves every one who is unfortunate enough to take the fever, to be prepared to out and run. I have known many as bad as you are recover; but—"

"Stop!" interrupted Murray; "would you croak over your victim before you kill him? Speak to him kindly; and if you would have him behave like a man, behave to him like one. But if you continue thus, I will myself run and tell the doctor. You had better listen and let him speak."

"Thank you, youngster, for your kind feeling," said Abbot; "but the shirts, are you come for them?"

"Do quiet yourself, my dear sir," said Murray: "there are many happy days for you yet, I hope; and I have been told, the best way to weather the storm is to show a fair front to it. Keep still a little—let me get you some barley-water. Now, if you have not any thing you wish particularly to say, lie down and endeavour to go to sleep, and Mr. Oliver can come another day."

"Just mind your own business, Mr. Murray," said Oliver. "You fancy, I suppose, that a man can get leave to go on shore every day of the week. Shipwrecked boys always grow vain with their escape. Go and comfort the purser: he is just about as silly as yourself.—Whilst you are able, Abbot, say your say: 'time and tide'—you know."

"Listen, Oliver," began the sick man. "When I first entered the service, you may remember that I was placed under your charge. You were kind to me, and I do not forget it. A few years only had passed when you may recollect it was in my power to serve you. I don't mean to

recall this act of common humanity to your mind with any other motive than to show that I risked my own life to save yours because I loved you ; and I solemnly declare, that when I rushed between the Frenchman's cutlass and your person, I would just as soon that it had pierced me as wounded you. From that moment, Oliver, I thought you hated me—I thought you felt like a man under a great obligation which it was almost impossible he could ever repay ; and yet, if ever man tried to forget the debt you owed, it was myself. —Now I come to the part which I would most willingly forget, and which touches you nearer still—your sister Louisa. Great Heaven ! I feel as if I was about to rave !—and yet well I know from yon poor fellow's rattles that death is nearer than I thought him when, with a foolish, impious word I toasted him. Don't hurry me, Oliver ; I must wait a little, or I shall be unable to conclude my story."

Murray, who had listened with great attention, and who had felt a certain tingling of the conscience in regard to his conduct to Hammerton, ran to assist the almost exhausted Abbot ; whilst Oliver sat by with unconcerned levity, keeping his eye to seaward as if he feared an apparition likely to come from that quarter, while he broke through the ravings of the purser and his almost suffocating rattle with a part of the song,

"What's death but the stoppage of breath—"

Murray looked at him as if he could have eaten him ; and, young as he was, he felt much inclined to measure his strength with the cowardly cur who could in such a place, and with death within hail of him, dare to sing such a song.

He offered some tamarind water to Abbot, who had fallen back upon his pillow ; and finding him too weak to be raised upright, he placed a quill in the glass, and put it to Abbot's mouth. There was madness in the very eager manner in which the poor fellow drained it ; and Murray was much hurt when he saw the purser sit bolt upright in his bed, and pointing to Abbot, say, "That man is mad ! what is the use of giving him drink !—give it to me, or I'll claw your soul out, you lantern-jawed jackanapes !" The nurse ran to him and gave him some water : he swallowed it with fearful quickness, and then catching as it were an idea from Oliver's song, he took up the stave and continued,

"And a rather damp bed in the ground underneath!"

Abbot, after a heavy sigh, seemed recovered; and proceeded in a fainter tone, whilst the purser's song, at first fearfully loud, gradually grew fainter and fainter, until he fell back on his pillow and kept apparently endeavouring to pick from his counterpane some dirt which he imagined he saw.

"High for true," said the black girl, "now him go for die! —you no see how him pick um blanket! Poor Massa Buckra! me really tink it's odd that so many come here for die on Palisades."

"Stop your raven's croak," said Murray, "and don't frighten the living by your prophecy of death. Look there!" he continued as he pointed to Abbot, "and keep that devil's tongue quiet. 'Faith! it's bad enough to die, without having a black woman to do the last office."

"Suppose massa get sick, him berry glad to have Nancy Bateson to cool um parched lip—him no call Nancy debil, and croaker, and raven; and when Massa Buckra come here wid um feber, him find his white friend look at um water and sing um song like him dere, (pointing to Oliver,) whilst poor nigger woman watch him all day and all night to give um drink."

Murray waved his hand, and the poor girl was silent. It was not long before he knew how true her words were; and had his fate condemned him to be sick at Jamaica, he would have experienced that kind solicitude and attention from the blacks which fear prevents the whites too often from administering.

"Oliver," continued Abbot, "I told you many years back I loved your sister Louisa, and that I never could relinquish the hope which she inspired, and you endeavoured to crush. I was then without money, a midshipman, and with, I admit, no very brilliant prospects, unless my uncle should return from India. I little thought ever to pass you in the service, and for Louisa's sake I would have given up my own for your promotion. In spite of all your watchfulness, I often met your sister: the very opposition to the match increased our affection. When I was absent, she wrote, and you have oftentimes handed me the letters. What makes you look so earnestly from that window, Oliver? Do I weary you with a too oft-repeated tale? or is it—"

"The packet!" interrupted Oliver, as he strained his eyes to make out a distant vessel.

"O that I could live," said Abbot, "to see her handwriting once more!—then, if I am to die, I could do so without a murmur! But it's hard—very hard, to go so young, before one has enjoyed the blessing of independence, and when one has lived envying all around, with plans projected never to be matured! Oliver, I tried to marry your sister, and now I tell you she consented. Here is her last gift round my neck: when I am gone, do you return it to her. I cannot outlive this;—See, see! how horrible! the only tenant of the ward is dead! And there! they take him away to bury him as unconcernedly as if custom had rendered it pleasant! Thank God, I shall be mad soon, for I feel it coming on!—Now, is it not horrible to think that the nurse who has just got rid of her patient must come to me, and then to another in turn? But she is a kind girl."

By this time the corpse was removed, and Nancy had taken her seat just opposite Abbot's bed: the bed-clothes of the purser had been removed, and a solemn stillness prevailed. Murray felt, and felt deeply; he even so far forgot himself as to put his hand in his pocket for some loose money to give Nancy, to insure greater attention to Abbot; but no sooner did he touch his heart's idol, than the silver slipped through his fingers and rattled against the rest which reposed in his pocket. Oliver's eyes continued turned towards the supposed packet: a little impatience might be traced in his countenance; and when he looked at Abbot, it was with a glance which almost seemed to say, "Why don't you die at once?"

"Here, Oliver," said the sick man, "give me your hand and forgive me. Whenever I could convey a letter to Louisa, I did it, and frequently we met by appointment. You know I was not like other midshipmen, revelling at the Blue Posts, or wasting life in scenes of debauchery and riot: I never accustomed myself to drinking, and you know that I never had that blot upon my character. Can you forgive me, Oliver,—can you forgive what in my sickness I avow, and for which, if I recover, I will give ample satisfaction—nay, all the satisfaction man can make to a poor injured woman?"

"Injured! Abbot," interrupted Oliver: "what can you mean?"

"It is for this that I have sent for you; and before I get worse, I may as well tell you how I intended to repair the injury. In the first place, after my own promotion, I urged my uncle, who is a man of considerable influence, to use his endeavours to forward you in the service. After much trouble, he succeeded in getting your name on the Admiralty list."

"Admiralty!" interrupted Oliver; "I thought it was the *Admiral's*. Then I should, after all, not get a death-vacancy!"

"No," continued Abbot; "but it was my intention, and it is my intention when I recover, to invalid, and then your promotion will be sure."

"Invalid!" interrupted Oliver as he bit his lip in vexation to find that his plans were at once frustrated,—"*Invalid!*" continued he to himself: as if the admiral would let a man invalid who was just as certain of dying as he is of being mad! "I have no time, Abbot, to hear any more—my leave is expired, and I may see you again to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" replied the poor sick fellow. "To-morrow's sun may never reach my eyes! for, as you sang,

'—Who in this climate of sickness and sorrow,
Shall dare to look forth to the light of to-morrow?"

Hah!—hah!" he continued, breaking into a little wandering; "it is a great song.

'Hark! hark! to the prayer of the Shark.'

Death—death! damnation! how I burn! I feel myself mad!—And there is that young harpy waiting for my death to buy my shirts. Curses on him! his eyes eat me up!—Come, Oliver, nearer to me. Louisa!—dear, dear, ruined Louisa!"

Oliver started from him, and gathering all his energy, he screamed rather than said, "What do you mean, you yellow-livered scoundrel? Speak! I say; or by the devil, who is now near you, I will shake you into reason!"

"For Gor A'mighty sake, massa, let um die quietly!" interrupted Nancy: "him really mad for true, or him no such fool to tell um brother that um sister ruined."

"Now," said Murray, who sat upon another bed near Abbot's,—“Now, Oliver, I think you have put in the new rum for some purpose: if ever a man got back evil for evil, you are that man—your very poison flows back in your own veins! I shall yet be a captain, and live to see you at that period a midshipman!”

“By heavens! you young devil, I will wring your neck as I would a turkey's if you interrupt me!—Get back, you black hag!—Now, Abbot, tell me of my sister and the truth, or by the Lord I will pray for your death as earnestly as I now pray for your living!”

Slowly the almost exhausted Abbot recovered his wandering senses. “I will tell you,” he began. “It was about a year since—you were at home, and may remember the evening when your sister sang one song twice over. On that evening you retired early, not to bed, but to your old haunts with some of your messmates: I went out with you and joined in your frolics. Before that, Louisa and myself were engaged to be married; and how earnestly I hoped for that result no one can imagine. But temptations are seldom resisted: time and opportunity, when seized, make the hero a conqueror, the lover successful. I waited with you until I saw the punch and brandy had nearly done their duty. It was then, intoxicated as you were, you sallied forth with your companions to go to the theatre: I returned with a stealthy pace to South Sea Beach. A light glimmered in a room which I well knew to be Louisa's, and long did I walk under the window in hope that love might recognise a familiar footfall: at last, for the night was fine and the sea came noiselessly against the beach, the curtain was withdrawn, and your sister looked at the calm scene before her. How at that moment my heart palpitated!—how dizzily I saw—how sick I felt! I watched—I saw that I was observed, and yet I feared to make myself known, for I perceived the shadow of another person occasionally passing and repassing. It was your mother, to whom she had told the tale of our affection: she was urging her to cast off a hopeless and, as she thought, poor, destitute midshipman. She told her, for I was afterwards made acquainted with the secret, that none knew the fearful pinch of poverty, but those who had endured it—none knew the misery of want when every luxury was denied, when children opened their little mouths for a day's sustenance and closed them with appetites unsatisfied, when the patient meekness of one sex was rebuked by the

disappointments of the other; and she finished with the old saying, that 'when Poverty came in at the door, Love flew out of the window.' She argued also, that in all concerns of a daughter's life a mother had a voice; that a parent should seldom be disobeyed even if the child thought the parent wrong, for it was more probable that youth should be mistaken, than that Nature should war against herself and urge a child to a guilty or a foolish action. Louisa cried much: it was to hide her tears that she opened the window. Her mother pressed her for an answer: she discarded me—she declared that henceforth I should be a stranger to her sight. Her mother kissed her—I saw it, and I guessed the cause in returned affection; I was not in error. I heard the door shut, and I gave a preconcerted signal, for we had often met clandestinely before. In a moment she was at the window. Oh, the force of woman's love is not easily turned aside!—promises may be made, the tongue may do violence to the heart; but few indeed can at once stop up the current of affection, or turn it like a drain into another channel. She came to the window and she whispered me to stop: I did—the lingering hour seemed a year. I should not have feared your return, for I knew you would, even if you slept on shore, be considered at home as having returned to your ship. Another light was visible through the shutters of your mother's room, and by eleven o'clock it was extinguished. I saw your sister again at the window, and she whispered to me the scene which had passed. I urged her at once to fly with me: she refused. I implored her to come down and join me in my midnight walk: she hesitated. At last I persuaded her, for all were in bed, to open the door and give me admittance: she did so. I urged my love again—I combated all your mother's arguments by the assurance that my uncle just returned would make me his heir—I told her of golden dreams of happiness which in her confined circumstances she could only expect in an alliance such as I offered her: she relented. Strange are the opposite extremes in women! she loved me the more—she hung upon my bosom; and now I tell you fearlessly, I seduced her. Don't start so!—hear me out, and then shake me back to madness, and I shall die as happily as the poor purser.

"It was about two o'clock that we heard your voice as you returned to sleep at your mother's house. Your sister, fearful of discovery, urged me to depart: with noiseless haste I prepared to do so,—I had reached the door and was

opening it when you arrived. I knew that although you had threaded your way to the house, you were in no plight to follow me. I opened the door, rushed past you as you fell on the pavement—ran with all speed to the Point, awoke a slumbering boatman and reached my own ship. The next morning we sailed to join the Channel fleet: my promotion overtook me—I was appointed to the Ringdove, which vessel was in company; and after writing a letter to your sister mentioning my misfortune in this appointment, I sailed for Jamaica. Here I found you: it was my intention to have told you that your promotion was sure when I found myself a victim to this fever. Forgive me, Oliver! By God, I will marry her!”

“Marry her, you villain! already has Death his hand upon you!—and, by heaven! my own brain turns! Can you hear me whilst I curse you?—backbiting hypocrite—infernal devil!”

“Hold, Oliver!” said Murray; “your revenge now is before you! never will he recover the death which you have produced! You have added to your sister’s misery—you have ruined your own prospects—you have murdered him!”

Madness had now come in reality. The black girl ran for the doctor, whilst Abbot, raving, sang the Shark’s Prayer; and as he vomited his last hope of life, he cried out, “Death! death! death!”

“He is gone!” said Murray.

“Not quite,” replied Oliver coolly: “but there is no chance of his recovery. And hark!” he continued, “two guns! the signal for the packet!—My hope is as desperate as his—curse him!”

“Curse him!” said Murray; “rather despise yourself! His wish was to have invalidated in order to have served you, and to return home to have married your sister. This is your own work, and even-handed justice has balked your malice: he was your best friend; and would have been your brother.”

“Hold your infernal tongue, Murray, or I will place you by his side!—See! he recovers a little; but his voice is thick—yet the last symptoms have not appeared. I do not hear the rattles, and the packet draws closer and closer to the harbour. If the land-wind would but come on early, and the sea-breeze die away, it might be morning before she arrives, and there would still be a chance.”

“Oliver,” said the dying man, “here!—nearer!—forgive

me! I never intended what I did! I would have married her! Give her back the locket, and say that on the death-bed which my own intemperance made for me I thought of her.

‘Hurrah! hurrah!

Near and far,

For a bloody war and a sickly season.’

Death—death!—Poor, dear, lost—lost—lost Louisa!—No, no! he will never hear of it! I will invalid and serve him! My uncle got it done! Hah—hah! bravo! old Admiral Noah and his Ark! Don’t let the youngster buy my shirts—he bought his own Doctor’s. The little devil! how his eyes shine! And see! there is the devil himself—all black!”

“Get away, Nancy,” said Oliver: “you frighten me with your colour.”

“Suppose massa ab white heart, him fear for debil; suppose him good, he no fear dead man.”

“Look after him kindly,” said Murray: “the sight is too horrible for me! And here,” he said, as his fingers again touched his money, which, however, again oozed through his fingers, “Mr. Oliver will reward you for your attention to his friend.”

Murray left the hospital. The sound he heard was that of poor Abbot, who in his madness screamed out, “Death! death!” The voice was heard: he died about sunset; the packet had anchored—the Honourable William Fairfield was at the admiral’s pen, and the next morning sold his midshipman’s coat, and appeared as Lieutenant of his Majesty’s ship Ringdove. Abbot was buried before noon; and Murray, as if to keep his promise and not offend the dead, refused to buy his shirts.

CHAPTER XVII.

The War with Spain.—Preparations for cutting out the *Hermione*.

It was not until some time after the burial of Abbot,—who, poor fellow, had hardly lived long enough to see the Blue Mountains, or gaze on the beauties of Newcastle Hill, before he was carried off,—that Murray could efface from his mind the last scene of the life of the victim. It made a very wholesome impression upon him: he had heard that between the ages of thirteen and twenty-five life was a very uncertain tenure in the West Indies; and whilst he bravely resolved not to be frightened into fever, he likewise determined to live prudently, and not to court a contest with one so quick in his operations as the mower of human hay.

The *Surprise* arrived, and Murray, after being victualled on board the day discharged, found himself a midshipman under Captain Hamilton. He was kindly received by all, and in spite of the sickness which was then committing sad havoc among her brave crew, he fell into his place on board the ship and commenced his duty with becoming alacrity. The service was now every thing to Murray: he had entered it to get rid of parental restraint—if such silken bondage could be called restraint; he was heartily sick of it before he had been an hour on board;—but he had already faced some perils—he had seen the worst part of the service, and he now looked forward to deeds which would bring his name before the public.

His new ship had been one of the many captured from the French and now used against them; she had been the *Unité*, and was now the *Surprise*, mounting thirty-two guns, with a compliment of two hundred men. He soon heard that his new captain was a keen cruiser; that wherever an enemy could be found, there would the *Surprise* be; that neither difficulties nor dangers stood in their way—the prize must be captured: in short, Walter was fortunate enough to be

with an active officer, and in a ship where he would soon become familiar with the service in all its branches.

The West Indies at this time (1799) was not unfrequently visited by French frigates, which did immense damage to the trade, and the utmost vigilance was required in order to counteract, or rather prevent, this interruption to our commerce. The Spaniards added their share to the devastation: along the coast from Santa Martha to La Guayra pirates hoarded their ill-gotten wealth, and privateers lurked behind Punta Espada, or anchored under the protection of the Bajo Seco. There was no station more prolific in prizes than the West Indies: promotion, from more causes than shot and sabres, was rapid; the money easily made, circulated with rapidity; and for fun and frolic, death and disease, fighting and prize-money, it was the station most coveted by all who had not independent fortunes, or had every thing to gain from promotion.

The lamentable example of the crew of the *Hermione*, a frigate under the command of Captain Pigot, had fortunately not extended further than that ship. She was taken from her officers by her seamen, and conveyed in safety to a port in the Spanish Main; she was fitted out with a Spanish crew at Porto Cabello, and having treacherously abandoned the flag of his Britannic Majesty, now lay at anchor in the above harbour, with the Spanish ensign flying from her flag-staff, and with every indication of being ready for sea, and as if about to sail.

If ever the recapture of a vessel was ardently wished for, it was in this case: the officers of our navy felt the stain upon the service inflicted by the mutiny on board that ship, and they viewed her a Spanish frigate, not taken in fair and manly fight—not run upon the coast by adverse winds in heavy gales, but conducted into the harbour by the people who ought to have defended her,—surrendered without a shot—captured in dishonour, disgrace, and mutiny.

Every frigate on the station had stood close in to the harbour and had seen the newly acquired ship of Spain: every challenge had been given to provoke her to quit her secure harbour—blank cartridges had been fired as a signal of contempt—but still the *Hermione* remained at anchor ready for sea, but most unwilling to sail.

The year 1799 was drawing to a close, when Captain Hamilton, after a personal interview with Sir Hyde Parker, at which he mentioned his conviction that with the assistance

of a launch he could cut out the frigate, notwithstanding the numerous batteries which protected her, despite the vast difficulties by which such an attempt would be met, and of the numerous crew with which she was provided.

The commander-in-chief listened attentively to the proposition; but it was one which it was perfectly impossible for him to sanction. For a small frigate like the *Surprise*, with many men sick on board, to attempt to cut out with her boats alone a frigate larger than herself, with a crew nearly doubly as numerous, savoured too much of temerity,—it was something quite new in the annals of naval warfare. Besides, several frigates had reported how securely the *Hermione* was protected, and a launch or a barge with twenty men (all that was asked for by Captain Hamilton) could never give sufficient aid for such an enterprise. Sir Hyde, therefore, after complimenting the man who ventured the proposition, refused the boat and dismissed the captain.

Next morning at break of day the *Surprise* was standing out of the leeward passage, favoured by the land-wind, and shortly afterwards took up her station off Cape la Vela, a place about eighty leagues to leeward of Porto Cabello, with instructions to cruise off that part of the coast, in order to intercept the *Hermione*, should she put to sea and endeavour to run for the Havannah. She was likewise to be active in her endeavours to suppress piracy and privateering.

Murray's natural disposition was soon remarked by his captain: he never sauntered on the quarter-deck with his hands in his pockets, thinking of home and the comforts he had left; but his step was lively, his whole deportment active; and whenever a sail was reported, he was the first aloft to make her out, the last to lose sight of her. In squalls, and they are frequent on this part of the coast, the first lad in the foretop was Murray: he would be found on the yard whenever any danger was to be incurred; night or day, he never skulked from his duty; and he was already known to his officers as a lad very far above the common—one who delighted in his profession, and one very likely to distinguish himself.

But time soon damped a little of his ardour: day after day the *Surprise* kept her station, but no vessel wearing a suspicious look appeared; and although every creek and cove were examined, no small low schooner could be discovered sheltered by the thick trees, no indication of traffic—all was

still along the coast, and prize-money was talked about, but seldom touched.

The wood and water of the *Surprise* began to get low, and it was evident that before long she must return to Jamaica: but Captain Hamilton was by no means inclined to return without having seen the object of his search; he therefore made sail to windward, and after a few days' progress against adverse winds, he arrived off Porto Cabello,—and there, with top-gallant yards across and large Spanish ensign, lay the *Hermione*.

The *Surprise* stood within gun-shot of the harbour's mouth, and Murray for the first time in his life saw an enemy's frigate; the shot which fell short of its mark as the *Surprise* tacked to stand out, was the first one he had ever seen fired in anger, and he caught the enthusiasm of the seamen who looked at her, and who, seaman-like, gave vent to their feelings as they d—d the lubberly rascal who fired a gun without a proper elevation.

In the mean time, Murray observed the captain particularly engaged in reconnoitring the position of the *Hermione*. The very narrow entrance was remarked: the frigate lay close to the battery; and on the other side, large merchant-ships were alongside the quay. The town, known to contain about eight thousand inhabitants, was disregarded; but the strong fort, the Castle of St. Philip, on the north side of the harbour, and the powerful defences on the southern side, consisting of batteries and fortified moles, were not overlooked; whilst on Punta Brava, to the north-north-east, another fort sufficient for the protection of the roadstead was visible. All who looked at the place shook their heads.

"She's snug enough," said one.—"It is called Hair Harbour," said another, "because it is so close and narrow that a hair would ride a ship in security."—"She's too wise to get under weigh whilst we are off the port," said a fourth; whilst one of the lieutenants was heard to say, "he would take a kidney for breakfast in exchange for all the prize-money got out of her."

Very different were the thoughts of Captain Hamilton.—Batteries he disregarded, because in a night attack they would become harmless directly his boats could get alongside of the frigate; and although they would not scruple to fire upon her should he succeed in cutting her out, yet they would make an indiscriminate murder of their own men, as well as of their enemies.

When the Surprise was well out of gun-shot, she shortened sail, made all snug for the night, and, according to custom in that ship, where the fatigues of duty were relieved by amusement, the hands were turned up to sky-lark: the fiddler began to scrape his tune, and some three or four of the best dancers were doing the double shuffle and cut, and reeling away in high style; one fellow giving the real Highland-fling, another toeing and heeling it after the most approved point of fashion; whilst a red raw Irishman kept hopping on one leg, and then on the other, which he called dancing.

On the fore-castle were a dozen of the more active playing goose, a game easily learned by any one induced to go near the circle formed by the players; the great secret being to get a goose, whose curiosity leads him to listen to the nonsense sported on the occasion, when a good-natured poulterer, a man who supplies the tailors with geese, pushes the unsuspecting gazer into the ring, where he is kicked and cuffed to his heart's content; each man, as he applies, his foot to either head or tail, proclaiming "Goose! goose! goose!" "None of my child!" and so on. No sooner is the victim released, than away starts the leader of the fun up the rigging. "Follow the leader" is repeated; and if the leader be an active man, a stranger would be a little surprised to see the rapidity with which the whole batch of players will scud up to the mast head, and with what speed they descend the backstays, taking up their seats on the deck as before, and waiting the arrival of another goose.

On the larboard side were a parcel of the younger lads playing "eling the monkey;" and at that moment the well-disciplined Surprise looked more like a booth at a fair than a man-of-war.

Fatigue superseded pleasure, and the night came forth in all the magnificence of the West Indies: for if a talented writer has dignified the North American night with the glories of the stars "as the angels' jewel shop,"* what might not be added in praise of those beauties?—those sparkling worlds seen to such advantage in the more southern climates! It is impossible to behold night robed in more dazzling splendour than in the West Indies; and all description, however poetical, must fall far short of the original.

On the starboard side of the fore-castle, between the two

* Miss F. Kemble;—Journal, &c.

foremost guns, sat a group of the good old breed of seamen,—fellows with tails half as long as themselves—rough, uncouth-looking men, ready for any danger and foremost in every adventure. These were ‘telling yarns’ and singing songs. Various were the anecdotes—but not very moral in their conclusions—which they related; whilst ever and anon the call for a song varied the amusement; and Murray found that he was not the only officer or gentleman who derived pleasure from the fun of the sailor.

Although numerous voices joined in chorus over the many ditties of Dibdin, yet none had a better welcome, or received a louder and more spirited acknowledgment, than the following, which was intended for, and reached the ears of the captain, who remained a *little* before the gangway-entrance, listening to the remarks of the men he commanded, and whom he himself had so often led into victory.

“When I first went afloat in a trim little boat,
To the sea and its perils a stranger,
I never once thought that a man might be caught
And be pressed into any great danger.
I thought, on the sea, a large frigate might be,
A cradle to rock on the billows;
That tinkers or tailors would never make sailors,
Or any such rough-looking fellows.

Poll swabb’d out her eyes when she saw the Surprise,
A fine fancy frigate, at anchor;
Her captain and crew, to their king ever true,
And for sailing, my eyes! what a spanker!
Says I, ‘Poll, my sweet witch, to the devil I’d pitch
Any shore going snob in the nation:
I’ll be one of her crew; so, dear Polly, adieu!
And hurra for the West India station!’

‘Oh! Jack, avast heaving; you can’t be for leaving,
And pennyless leave your sweet beauty?’
‘All gammon,’ says I, ‘is the tear in your eye!
Like a seaman I’m true to my duty:
Come, take all my money,—now, don’t look so funny,—
Here’s every note in my pocket.
I’m not on the wing yet; so cut off a ringlet,
And coil it in this pretty locket.’

'Poll pockets the rhino,' says Jack, 'Now, good-b'ye, now;
I shan't shave my head for your fancy.'
She slaps her red elbow: says Jack, 'Now to h— go,
And I'll go on board of the Nancy.'
The anchor was started, my love and I parted;—
Here's luck in my new situation;
Here's our captain and crew, and a slap at the foe,
In the frigate, the pride of the station."

"Well, that's a right good one, Jack! So Polly pocketed the Abraham Newlands, and left you to go on board the Nancy.—I wish we just had a glass of grog to drink success to the captain, and a touch at that Spaniard behind the Mole Head."

"Lord love you!" says one; "if I don't think we could take the shine out of those smoke and 'baccy chaps, with all their garlick and onions, with sixty of us in the boats.—Spaniards, they say, stick for ever behind a wall and are as hard to get out as an old rat from the purser's storeroom; but if we once get on board, I'm mistaken if we don't start their anchors before they have time to say, '*Gracias á Dios*.'"

This speech chimed in well with the feelings of the captain, and before long his steward was seen giving the singer of the song a little of that generous stuff which makes life run away, and while it relieves care, is digging a furrow in the cheek for the tears of old age to run clear of the chin. Jack shared it out with his messmates, sang the last verse of his own song again, and then added, "Cut her out, Ben! Why, for the matter of that, we could do that same thing, and board the governor's house through the front window, without ever mounting the hatchway."

"Place the look-out men forward," was heard from the officer of the watch.

"Ay, ay, sir," said Jack; and the whole party broke up.

The next day the *Surprise* was off the harbour's mouth. Captain Hamilton was at the mast-head, and by his side was Murray. As far as a calculation could be made of dangers and difficulties, it was done; and that evening every man was mustered at quarters with his arms, the cutlasses were inspected, beackets desired to be worked on the handles, the pistols were examined, and after the retreat had been beaten, the oars of all the boats were ordered to be muffled, the slide of the coronade in the launch was inspected, and all those minute preparations made which generally herald great and desperate undertakings.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A fighting Doctor.—Cutting out the *Hermione*.—Murray's gallantry.

It was certain on board the *Surprise* that something was about to be attempted; but not an officer had heard a word drop which led him to expect the affair was so near at hand. That day the first lieutenant, the surgeon, and Murray dined with Captain Hamilton; and the dinner passed off much as all dinners on board a ship generally do,—a certain condescension on one part, and a proper official reserve and respect on the other. Every man who has made the slightest observation on naval discipline is aware that no familiarity—no, not of the slightest kind, should take place at the captain's table: for the lieutenant to be respected, he must show a proper respect to his captain; the midshipman claims from his inferior that which he shows to his superior; and any innovation in the service which tends in the slightest degree to elevate any of the ranks to the prejudice of the one above tends to raze the pillar of subordination by which the naval service has been so pre-eminently upheld. It is the discipline of the navy which has led her fleets to conquest: and those who have read of the wreck of the *Alceste* and the wreck of the *Medusa*, will be aware at once how much the personal safety of all is guarded and protected by subordination and discipline.

The cloth was removed, the steward had retired, the king's health had been drunk, when the conversation took a most sudden and unexpected turn—sudden and unexpected it might be called, for no soul but one on board of the *Surprise* had harboured the idea, and he had kept it to himself until this moment.

"I intend," began the captain in a cool and measured tone of voice, looking at the first lieutenant, "to cut out the *Hermione* to-night."

Murray's face brightened with delight, the surgeon rubbed his hands, and Mr. Wilson, the first lieutenant, remained silent in order to allow his captain to unfold his plans.

"The fact is," continued Captain Hamilton, "that before long we must return to Jamaica, for the limit of my cruise is nearly expired. What will be the consequence? The *Hermione* will put to sea; she will either make good her run to the Havannah, or she will be the prize of some more fortunate ship. My plans are all arranged; and as I expect this will not be performed without some lost and some wounded, you must get your implements of torture ready, Doctor, and be prepared to cut us up cautiously."

"Faith," replied the surgeon, Mr. M'Mullen, as brave a man as ever lived; "it's not myself, captain, you are going to leave on board such a night as this. Oh, sir, that same thing can't be, and I'm certain that somehow or other I shall be there touching the cigars."

"Why, doctor," replied the captain, much pleased with the enthusiastic manner in which his proposition had been received; "you must remember that you have no assistant; and that if you were killed, the wounded would suffer unaided."

"It's very little use, Captain Hamilton," replied the doctor, "making objections. I know all that's likely to happen, and I hope on such an occasion, when there must be real good hard work and a most glorious row, you will not refuse my aid, for I believe it's not the first time that I've stood by you on like occasions."

"I admire your readiness, doctor—I give you all due credit for your courage and your kindness; but in an affair like this we must take every precaution to have assistance at all points. There is no man alive in whose courage I have greater reliance than yours—no man would more readily face a desperate service than yourself; but should I allow you to share our dangers to-night, and some unfortunate shot take effect upon you, I should never cease reproaching myself when I saw the gallant fellows who had assisted in this affair writhing in pain and no means left of alleviating their sufferings. It must not be, doctor; you really must stay on board."

Captain Hamilton had looked the doctor in the face when he made this handsome speech, and had closely watched his countenance and its changes; but when he concluded, he remarked a kind of desperation creep over his gallant friend, as

much as to say, "I go there to-night, or curse me if I am here to-morrow."

"I hope, sir," said Murray with a look of great anxiety, "that I may be permitted to go?"

"You are to be in my boat, Murray. I shall lead this business myself."

"And I sir?" asked the first lieutenant.

"You will command the launch, Wilson. I have arranged all the plan, and after quarters I intend addressing the ship's company. I dare say, doctor, you will give me a cheer at the conclusion: you know how soon that electric spark is communicated, and how readily the seamen follow the example which a brave man sets them."

The compliment was lost upon the doctor, for he never heard it: he was working himself up for a speech as to his determination, and let out just enough to be heard. "Holy Father! here's a disgrace come upon us! asked to dinner to hear the plan, and then find that every blessed son amongst us is to be in the row except myself, and I am to cheer the very proposition I am not allowed to assist! Then by my faith, never one of the M'Mullens was treated that way before: and if I don't go, may the devil after his own especial fancy run a-hunting with me!"

The captain could not help smiling at the running base of the doctor's grief, and the nice hunting party the devil and the doctor were to take together; but he continued his conversation upon a point so interesting, and so likely, one would suppose, to end in discomfiture.

"Whom do you intend, sir," asked Mr. Wilson, "to leave in charge of the ship?"

"Mr. Madge, the master," replied the captain: "he knows the reefs about this place, and he must keep the frigate as near as possible to the harbour. I hope I have made all arrangements for the best; and now I propose one bumper to the success of certainly the most desperate undertaking ever attempted."

He filled his glass, the surgeon filled his, Wilson his, and Murray let the drops fall until the glass was crowned.

"I will give you," said the captain, "Success to our enterprise, and little after-work to our friend the doctor."

Both the doctor and Wilson drank it; but Murray added, "And God bless the captain for putting me in his boat!"

This little deviation from the rigid behaviour at a captain's table was overlooked; the doctor adding, "Small blame to

you, youngster, for the addition ; and 'faith I'm mistaken if I wouldn't have said as much, and more besides, if I had been clapped in that boat, and sure of being hit the first shot."

"We had better not say a word about it before the servants," remarked Captain Hamilton: "these little surprises succeed best when the men have not long to wait between the intention and the deed."

"Faith, some of them," replied the surgeon, "had better let their wounds and their courage be cured by the *first intention*, for any thing they'll get beyond plaster if they get on board again: it's not my advice they'll get, without I lend them some assistance this same blessed evening. I'm not particular, Captain Hamilton, about which boat you place me in: I'll take the jolly boat if you like; or if you have given that to some one else, I'll just row myself in the dingy; and between you and I, Wilson, I don't think I shall be last on board either."

After the toast, according to immemorial custom in the navy, the white wine was handed round; the coffee followed, and within two minutes the drum beat to quarters. Wilson and Murray ran on deck; but the doctor followed the Captain into his after-cabin, and in a very few words conveyed his intentions thus:

"Captain Hamilton ——" began the doctor.

The captain started with astonishment at finding himself followed into his cabin, but instantly turned towards his guest and asked him what he required.

"Merely, sir, that you listen to me. I must go in this affray to-night; and I tell you plainly that if I am not allowed to do so, you will not find me alive when you return."

The tone and manner in which the intelligence was communicated, coupled with the known character of the man, decided Captain Hamilton in allowing him to go; and when this was communicated to him, he replied, "Now, by St. Patrick! let's hear if the cheer won't be heard half-way down to Jamaica;" and he walked on deck, to use the expression of a bystander, "as pleased as a piper."

Quarters were over, the men reported sober and steady, when Mr. Wilson desired the boatswain to send every body aft on the quarter deck; and as this is seldom done unless something is wrong, or something likely to be effected, the crew came aft like a flock of sheep all huddling together,—the most uneasy in their minds as to the result imitating the

sick of the flock and keeping somewhat aloof from their companions.

When the men were reported "all present," Captain Hamilton addressed them. "My men," he began, (and his men instantly took off their hats, and began to plaster their hair down with the palms of their hands, as they edged up a little closer towards the combing on the skylight,) "we have sailed together some time, and have seen a little service together. I know the value of every one of you; and, I trust, there is not a man in the ship who would be afraid to follow his captain even if he went to pull the devil himself out of his habitation." Here some of the men began to smile, others to hitch up their trousers, whilst others looked at their hats as they kept twirling them round. "Now what I am going to propose to you is not quite so desperate, although we may have to go into as hot a fire to effect our object. You have seen that English frigate, the disgrace to our service, riding in a Spanish port with a Spanish ensign; and if we remain here wishing her to come out, we might wish from the first day of January to the last day in December, and then begin again. Out she will not come whilst we are here, and to go to her in the frigate is impossible; in the first place, we should have to warp into the harbour, and I have counted quite a sufficient number of guns to believe that impracticable. We cannot leave her there, my lads, and return to Jamaica without having attempted any thing: that is not like the *Surprise*, the fancy frigate of the station. She will not come to us, and we can't go to her; but we can cut her out with the boats," said the captain as he raised his voice, "and we will do it this night, my lads!"

A burst of tremendous cheering followed the announcement, and far above all voices was heard the surgeon's: he had got on a carronade slide, and as if not sufficiently conspicuous, jumped upon the gun, and last of all stood on the hammocks and bellowed himself hoarse.

"I see," continued the captain, "I need not ask for volunteers."

"I'll go, your honour," said an Irishman; and every man fore and aft called out, "And I, and I."

"Bravo, my lads!" continued the captain; "you are the men to smooth difficulties—I knew you would all volunteer; and as it is impossible for all to go, I have selected some few of you to accompany me, for I will not send any man where I dare not go myself."

This met the wishes of the crew, and again and again they cheered their gallant commander.

"We have but little time," he continued, "for preparation; but we are always prepared. I shall therefore myself muster the men as they are to go, and tell them off in the numbers for each boat; so pay attention, my lads, and once for all understand that the men I have selected are not in any manner preferred to the rest, but are taken from different parts of the ship, so that she can be worked and handled like a man-of-war, without there being a deficiency in any one station. It's no use crowding the boats, when expedition and determination can do more than the creeping heaviness of crammed boats, in which there is hardly room for the men to pull, and where a single shot does immense mischief. As we seem to understand each other perfectly, there is no reason why I should say more than I have done; but, mind you, my lads, the first man who gets on board shall have three hundred dollars, and the man who places the Union Jack over the Spanish flag shall have three hundred dollars also. The rest shall not be without reward; and after what I have said, there is not a man amongst you but would give three cheers for the first on board, and success to the brave fellow who places the English flag once more upon that ship's signal-staff."

The speech was concluded, and again the ship's company cheered. The captain then took some papers from his pocket, and at the words "Silence, fore and aft!" you might have heard a pin drop.

"The officers," he continued, "of the different boats will muster their men, and I shall afterwards inspect them. None of the blue-jackets are to have fire-arms, except pistols; and every man is to be dressed in blue, not showing the least white about him. The pass-word is 'Britannia'; the answer, 'Ireland.' The first division of boats, consisting of the pinnace, launch, and jolly-boat are to board on the starboard or inside bow, gangway, and quarter; the second division, consisting of the gig, black and red cutter, to board on the larboard or outside bow, gangway, and quarter. I shall command in the pinnace, with Mr. Maxwell the gunner, Mr. Murray, and sixteen men, and lead; Mr. Wilson, with a midshipman and twenty-four men, will be in the launch; and in the jolly-boat will be the carpenter, one midshipman, and eight men. In the pinnace, I shall board on the starboard gangway; the launch is to board on the

bow, and instantly cut the bower cable. She will be provided with sharp axes, and a platform is to be run along the quarter; the jolly-boat is to board on the quarter, then to cut the stern-cable, and send two men in the mizen-top, to loose the mizen-topsail. And, remember! my lads, the men named to do these several duties are to think of nothing else but fulfilling their orders. I cannot sufficiently impress upon you how much depends on this; for if, for instance, we loose the sails, and the man has omitted to cut the stern-fast, she might be sunk by the batteries before the end was accomplished.

"The gig is to board on the larboard bow, and four men from her are to jump aloft to loose the fore-topsail; they will remember to foot it clear of the top, to cut all the gear away, so that she may sheet it home without any stoppage. She is to be under the direction of the surgeon, and will carry sixteen men. The black cutter, under Lieutenant Hamilton, with the marine officer, Mons. de la Tour du Pin, and some marines under him, are to board on the larboard gangway; the boatswain, Mr. Cook, will command the red cutter, and, with the sixteen men under his command, is to board on the larboard quarter.—Now, understand me well, my lads. In the event of our getting alongside unperceived, the boarders only are to board; the boats' crews are to remain in their boats, push ahead, and take the ship in tow: but in the event of our being discovered, and having to pull to the frigate in the face of her fire, then every man is to board, with the exception of the bowmen.—Remember," said Captain Hamilton to his officers, "our object is the *Hermione*. Turn not aside for boats or batteries—one only object is before you: let us but once gain a footing on her decks, and I know I can trust to my gallant ship's company to do the rest.

Here he concluded, saying to each officer as he gave him the paper in which were the names of the seaman selected to perform the several duties before mentioned, "I trust you will make your men understand you as clearly as, I hope, I have been understood. In half an hour we shall be off; and, remember! our rendezvous is on the quarter-deck of the *Hermione*."

That was a busy half-hour; and out of the ninety-six men named for this desperate work, not one thought but of the certainty of success, so well and so carefully had all things been arranged. Murray knew that he would be in the hot-

test of the work, for the captain would be sure to be first alongside; and that as he planned, so would he be first to execute. He knew this would be a service of great danger—still his usual idleness could not be overcome—he could not sit down to write to his father; but from a superstitious feeling,—and the greatest minds are more or less tinged and darkened by it,—he placed the locket which had once saved his life round his neck, and even in the fervour of that superstition kissed it: he thought of her who was long since numbered with the dead; but though he might have thought of one who regarded him as the stay and prop of his house, he did not write to him. And that half-hour which others employed in sharpening weapons and in covering oars was passed by Murray in feverish excitement, thinking of the danger with which he had to cope, and taking some few precautions which the most indolent are apt to do when danger is at hand.

The *Surprise*, at dark, had stood in-shore under a crowd of sail; and when sufficiently close, the boats were hoisted out, and left the ship in two divisions, as indicated; the pinnace leading the first, and the gig leading the second, having the rest in tow. At the time of leaving the *Surprise*, the *Hermione* was visible through a night-glass; and such was the anxiety of the leader of this bold enterprise, that he never once lost sight of her, but stood with the night-glass in his hand until an event occurred which made the gallant captain look in another direction.

The boats had crept along silently and rather slowly towards the harbour's mouth; and now the lights were visible from the town: they were about two miles distant from the *Hermione*, and as yet apparently undiscovered. The oars as they silently dipped in the water were feathered close to its surface; no phosphoric brightness betrayed the approaching enemy—not a word was uttered, and even in the leading boat, so strictly was silence observed, and so well were the boats pulled, that the jolly-boat was scarcely discernible. Suddenly the boats were hailed; a volley of musketry succeeded, a long gun dashed its contents in the direction of the English crews, and it became evident that all was discovered. The *Hermione* was seen with lights on her main-deck and at quarters; a gun from the shore answered the gun previously fired, and it was plain that the only surprise which could have been effected was now destroyed.

Captain Hamilton trusted that his officers would have

obeyed his directions, by disregarding every other object but the one in view; and when he cast off the tow and gave three cheers, he added, "Hurrah for the first on board!" Murray steered the pinnacle, and her bow never varied in the least from the direction of the frigate. The gallant fellows now no longer dipped in their oars silently; but they dashed forward, cheering as they went, and giving the enemy ample time to make every preparation. It was now the first error was committed. The launch and the second division of boats, instead of dashing forwards, turned short round upon the gun-boats which had given the alarm, and thus Captain Hamilton, who kept his face towards his foe, reached the bow of the *Hermione* unsupported: not a boat was pulling in the same direction but the jolly-boat, and she was soon far astern.

As the pinnacle passed the larboard bow of the *Hermione*, the fore-castle gun was fired at her; but she was so close, that the contents passed over her: and at that moment might be seen the extraordinary sight of a frigate's pinnacle, with about twenty men in all, going unsupported alongside a frigate having at least three hundred men on board, to cut her out; that frigate being perfectly prepared and actually at quarters with her main-deck properly lighted by fighting lanterns, and her captain and officers on the quarter-deck awaiting an attack, as was afterwards affirmed, from the *Surprise* herself, and not her boats.

In a work of this kind we only follow the hero. As the pinnacle was crossing the hawse of the *Hermione*, her rudder caught a rope which went from the bows of the frigate to her boat moored at the buoy. Murray lifted the rudder, when the boat fell between the starboard fore-chains and the cathead. A rush was made to be the first man on board. Captain Hamilton, on jumping upon the bower anchor, which had that day been weighed and was still covered with mud, slipped off, and nearly fell into the boat: however, still keeping firm hold of the foremost lanyard of the fore-shroud, he recovered his footing, and leaped over the bulwark. He was not the first man, but he was the third. His gallant companions came close after him; Murray being foremost, and the gunner the next. The foresail of the frigate, ready for bending and hauling out to the yardarms, was lying across the main-stay: this afforded a capital screen for the few men on board; and the Spaniards who had been stationed

there being instantly dislodged, it was taken possession of, and breathing-time thereby afforded.

There was no time to be lost in thinking upon their deserted situation, and not a man of the party seemed to care much about it. The captain gave the order to advance, and the gunner, backed up by Murray, soon made a rush aft. At this moment the *Hermione's* crew opened their fire at the supposed frigate and in the direction of their own gun-boats. In the confusion and the astonishment of the moment, the forecastle was soon cleared of the Spaniards, and the English party advanced to the starboard gangway, forcing the enemy before them until they reached the break of the quarter-deck. Here was a stop to all advance: in vain was Murray's voice heard—in vain his bright blade seen—in vain the rallying sound of the captain's exhilarating words, or the gunner's coarse appeal to the men; the Spaniards, perceiving the few by whom they were attacked, rallied in their turn, advanced with overwhelming numbers, and the English, with their fronts to their foes and disputing every inch with uncommon firmness and determination, were forced back on the gangway and beaten as far as the forecastle. It was in this scene of contention that the forethought of Captain Hamilton became conspicuous: he had armed his men principally with boarding-pikes and tomahawks, and the Spaniards, who had forgotten to fix their bayonets, were kept aloof from closer combat by the array of iron pikes. The Spaniards, as they fired, crowded together and rendered it impossible for them to reload: they had advanced to the gangway: those behind forced on those in advance, and those in advance were met by the unflinching bravery of the *Surprise's* men, who were only to be beaten back by the press of numbers to whom they were opposed.

"At all risks," said Captain Hamilton, "defend the break of the forecastle until some assistance comes."

Murray called aloud, "Rally, rally—stand firm my gallant fellows!"

The gunner seemed to gather fresh strength from the enemy's opposition; and although his blows fell thick and heavy, yet he continued them with unabated vigour, and boldly and bravely defended the place. Captain Hamilton at this moment saw that without assistance all was lost—it was otherwise impossible to hold out five minutes longer. The Spaniards, elated, at the retreat of their foes, cheered each other as they pressed forward; and for a moment the brilliant

enterprise was on the point of being lost, owing to the different officers having disobeyed their captain's orders and loitered behind with contemptible gun-boats.

A moment at such an hour was of value. The captain ran round the larboard side to the bow, and there found a man leaning over and giving vent to his feelings in most appropriate language. "The devil most particularly burn you all, you villanous, cowardly, cravenly curs!—here's a row, and you sit there cowering under the bows like a set of children under a shed in a squall of rain!"

At this moment Captain Hamilton, who mistook the gentleman for a Spaniard, touched him up in the rear with his dirk.

"Holy Father!" said the surgeon, turning round; there's a prod that would start off a Galway post-horse! Is it you, Captain Hamilton? Bad luck to those brutes in the boat who refuse to board!"

"Come up, you scoundrels, this instant," said the captain, "or I'll fire right into you."

This brought the boat's crew up; and with this reinforcement, trifling as it was, hope began to brighten.

"Take these fourteen men, Mr. M'Mullen," said the captain; "push along the larboard gangway; and endeavour to occupy the quarter-deck. Quick, quick, my lads! never mind the fire on the main-deck: the confusion will favour you, and the Spaniards are crowding on the other gangway."

It required no second advice to the surgeon: ripe and ready for the row, he led his men as the captain directed, gained unopposed the quarter-deck, and seeing that the fighting was on the starboard gang-way, he took the Spaniards in the rear—placing them between two fires. Murray rallied the men with his young voice; and the dispirited Spaniards, assailed fiercely by both parties, began to quail, and some to cry for quarter. Captain Hamilton was now alone on the quarter-deck—it was the rendezvous, and he awaited the surgeon's party; here he found himself vigorously assailed by four of the enemy: he had retreated near the mainmast, and, fearing lest his foot should get entangled in any of the ropes near the bits, he resolutely stood the attack, when one of the four swinging the butt-end of his musket round his head, struck the captain with all his force and knocked him over the other side of the deck on the combings of the after-hatchway. This blow would have

proved fatal, had not the captain received it on his arm. At this critical moment, the Spaniards having surrendered on the gangway, Murray advanced; and with him came some of the gunner's party:—they soon placed their commander in security and armed him again with a tomahawk.

The Spaniards below had by this time become acquainted with the nature of the attack, and a rush was made from the main-deck by the after-hatchway, but the English, flushed with the success of the enterprise, and finding themselves in possession of the quarter-deck, soon repulsed the enemy. During this affair the marine officer's party boarded on the larboard gang-way. This welcome but tardy assistance,—for it appears they had tried to board on that gang-way before, but were repulsed,—placed the success of the enterprise beyond a doubt, as far as the possession of the frigate was concerned, although from the main-deck a continued fire of musketry was still kept up. In the mean time the cables had been cut: the men appointed to perform that duty, as they got to their respective situations, made ample amends for their former neglect. The mizen-topsail was loose, the ship adrift, and creeping out of the harbour, when the marines made a rush on the main-deck, and the *Hermione* surrendered. Amongst the foremost men aloft, on the fore-top-sail-yard was Murray: he appeared the least fatigued of all the brave fellows concerned in this desperate act, and his voice was plainly heard calling aloud, "Hurrah! my lads, she's moving ahead from under the batteries!"

The gunner, who had been foremost in all dangers and difficulties, now took the helm, and steered the ship he had so mainly contributed to capture. He was assisted by two other men; though all three of them wounded, they were still sufficiently stout to stand to the wheel, and the *Hermione* was again under English colours.

It was still within the power of probable events that the frigate would not be cleared of all the difficulties by which she was surrounded: the batteries, being now convinced that the English held undisputed possession of the frigate, opened a tremendous, but, very fortunately, an ill directed fire. Every precaution was taken to keep the men out of danger; and although the main and spring-stays were shot away, the gaff brought down, from the peak of which trailed the Union Jack over the Spanish flag, and several shot had taken effect below the water-line, to the no small discomfiture of the prisoners below, yet little actual damage was done.

The prisoners finding themselves insecure, attempted, a few of them, to escape: the launch was called on board, and eighty of the Spaniards put therein and veered astern. The crew of the boat began, in spite of the fire, to secure the mainmast by the runners and tackles; the fore-topsail swelled with the land-breeze, which the firing that fortunate night did not put down; and five minutes after the cables had been cut, the frigate rose to the swell of the sea at the mouth of the harbour.

This intimation that the ship was out of the harbour made the prisoners below desperate, and they resolved to fire the magazine, and blow up themselves and their conquerors. The plot was overheard by a Portuguese sailor, the coxswain of the gig, named Antonio. A discharge of musketry was immediately fired below, a general cry of "surrender" followed, and a guard was placed on the magazines to prevent the threatened catastrophe.

By half-past one, about an hour and a half after the first man had boarded, the batteries ceased firing; although the last discharge of grape reached the ship. One shot wounded the captain, and another fell spent against his leg. The surgeon, who all along had been in the thickest of the fight, — who was one moment fighting on the main-deck, and then down below securing the magazine, — was at this time standing by the captain: he took the grape-shot in his hand, and remarked, "By J—, captain, had those Spaniards put five grains more of powder in the cartridge of the gun which fired this shot, my instruments and myself would have been wanted to cut off your leg."

In the mean time, Murray had seated himself on the taffrail, and never moved, in spite of the heavy fire. Very different thoughts occupied his mind. The deed was done, the excitement passed; but the reward remained to be claimed. The first man who boarded was killed; the second was Murray. A little of the devil of his former life was at work; and that avarice which had prompted him to purloin the fifty pounds from Hammerton, although checked, was by no means subdued: — the sneaking propensity to lying was also now on the ascendent. That he had done his duty he knew; for the captain had shaken him by the hand on the quarter-deck — the gunner had proclaimed him a devil at fighting — the man who loosed the fore-topsail affirmed that he did more than the whole four put together — and the surgeon, who had seen him, young as he was, on the gangway head-

ing his men, swore he was certain that Murray was from the Emerald Island, as he handled his sword with all the dexterity of a Patlander at Ballynasloe.

The little vanity which he might reasonably have felt when he considered that he placed the Union Jack over the Spanish flag never occupied him much; he was thinking of the money that might be got by the affair. If he failed in his claim to the first reward, he was certainly entitled to the second: if he could not establish that he was first on board,—which in point of fact he was, for the man who had been foremost was killed on the shank of the anchor, and never actually got on board,—yet he thought that he could claim to be so. The colours were a certainty: this so got hold of him, that when some one remarked “that those devils must have placed forty thousand grape-shot in one of their discharges,” Murray remarked, “that he did not think she” (meaning the prize) “would sell for so much as forty thousand pounds.”

Day dawned; the *Surprise* was in the offing; and no man who has not shared in an enterprise of this kind can tell the feelings—the proud feelings, which occupy the heart of him who, having achieved a considered impossibility, hears the first welcome of his shipmates in the cheers which they give him.

A schooner was observed to windward: the boats were manned by fresh crews—she was captured, brought alongside, the prisoners placed in her, (with the exception of her captain and two men, who were necessary for her condemnation in the Admiralty Court,) and by one o'clock, thirteen hours from the commencement of the attack, the *Hermione's* former crew were landed in Portobello—the two frigates had shaped their course for Jamaica—every damage aloft had been repaired, and the *Surprise* and her capture resembled two cruising frigates, rather than a capturer and the captured.*

It can hardly be necessary to point out the gallantry of this enterprise: it stands alone in the annals of naval warfare. We have had, it is true, numerous exploits of the most dash- ing and daring nature; but not one—no, not even Captain

* The whole of this account is strictly true: it is taken from the papers of the gunner, who died a few months since at Plymouth, and has been attested by the living as strictly and impartially correct.

Coglen's—can be placed in competition with this. The *Hermione* was actually taken by, at the most, thirty men; seventeen held possession of her until the assistance of the surgeon and his party arrived, and it was at least twenty minutes from the commencement before the marine officer boarded. It was no surprise—every preparation had been made to resist even the frigate herself; and had the orders been punctually attended to, there cannot be a doubt but that the ship would have been carried in five minutes. In fact, it was the result of cool deliberation, well-organised crews, and of bravery as distinguished by the result, as by talent in the planning, and judgment in the execution.

On board of the *Hermione* were found eight thousand dollars. With this sum Captain Hamilton resolved to reward those who had been of the most assistance, and there was not a murmur heard when his determination was made known. The men were sent aft; the question was asked, "Who was the first on board?" The gunner answered, "Mr. Murray."—"Who next?" A man answered, "The captain."—"Who next?" "The gunner."—"Who next?" "John Watkins."—To John Watkins was given three hundred dollars.

"The officers," said Captain Hamilton, "have other besides pecuniary rewards. Mr. Murray would be ill satisfied indeed if his services, could they be adequately recompensed, were to be rewarded by money. No! let us hope we have higher views; and he, I am convinced, feels more in the generous expression of the crew, than in receiving money he cannot want. I own properly it belongs to him; but I will convey to the crew what I know are his sentiments,—that both the money for placing the proud flag of old England over the Spanish ensign, which he did, and that which is his by right for being the first man on board, are cheerfully given to other brave seamen, who, from the wounds they received, and the courage they exhibited, well merit this distinction. But Mr. Murray shall not go without a reward;"—(here Murray's heart became a little elated;) "before the crew now assembled, I present him with the sword I myself wore on that night, as well as the pistols taken from the first lieutenant: and I think no one will feel disposed to doubt his having richly deserved this public honour, when he was both the first on board, and the first to plant our flag aloft."

The crew here gave three hearty cheers, and many voices were heard praising the distinguished valour of our hero: but he very coldly received the honour; he thought it hard

that his money should be thus handed over to others, and every chink of the silver, as the dollars were counted, jarred against his avaricious heart.

"The surgeon," said the captain, "will find an inadequate reward in sharing the prize-money with the lieutenants, to which, I presume, there will be no objection: the gunner we must get promoted to a larger ship, and we must reserve enough to fit him out as becomes so brave a man. And now my lads, I think, when we enter Port Royal, we shall be welcomed by our admiral as men who have done good service to their country; and you shall not want liberty for a cruise on shore. For my own part, I attribute my success to the gallant manner in which I was supported; and whatever reward I may receive, I shall receive it as emanating from you. And in whatever situation I may be placed, the crew of the *Surprise*, the fancy frigate of the station, as I heard one of you sing the other night, shall never apply to me in vain. I have distributed the eight thousand dollars to the best of my judgment, and, I trust, to your satisfaction; and I have only once more to thank you for the support you gave me, and to congratulate you on our undertaking being crowned with success, and without, thank God! any very serious loss."

The crew cheered their brave captain; and four days afterwards, the *Surprise* and the *Hermione* rounded the low point of Port Royal harbour, the prize was anchored in security near the capturer, with the flag of Old England once more flying from her gaff-end.

CHAPTER XIX.

Hammerton's courtship, and return to England.—A surprise and a recognition.

THE honours and glories showered upon Captain Hamilton came more from men's tongues than from their purses. The freedom of the City of London was voted, and he was made a knight,—the one, indeed both, nominal honours; and if for the capture of a frigate men have been properly promoted to a baronetcy, one can hardly imagine why he who captured a frigate in a frigate's *boats* should have been so very insufficiently rewarded. Murray was rewarded as much as

he could be—he was converted from a youngster into an oldster: and little as this may be in the eyes of the uninitiated, it is a prodigious advancement in the midshipman's berth. Bold and forward lads do well there—advance them once, and they never retreat. On the quarter-deck Murray found himself a mate of a watch, with the officers ready to instruct him; occasionally with the hands on deck he worked the ship; as far as practical seamanship could advance him, he made great progress, and before he had been three years at sea he was much better qualified to command than many men of four times the servitude; as such we leave him for the present, to record the adventures of Hammerton.

Hammerton, after some short repose in Virginia, and after having lost his heart to his benefactor's daughter, one Maria Corncob, departed for Halifax through the States. He had avoided or only partially partaken of the fogmatic or anti-fogmatic drams of peach-brandy which the settlers in these parts have recourse to in proportion or in quantity as the fog is or promises to be.

"I expect," said Jonathan Corncob, "that you've been a making of love to my daughter, and I calculate she loves you amazingly. Now, before you go, I reckon you are going to say as much to her, because she expects it also and likewise."

"I do assure you," said Hammerton, "that I esteem your daughter very much."

"Oh, blow your esteem clean slick out of any pipe, Mr. Hammerton!—it's your love I'm a talking about."

"I really do not know what to say, Mr. Corncob, after all your kindness to me: it would be worse than criminal if I were to engage your daughter's affections when I may never see her again, and if I did, I should be unable to marry her, for I have not a penny in the world."

"Well, Mr. Hammerton, and supposing you have not, I calculate I have though—and just as pretty a patch of ground as any man between the Capes. Now I—this is all about it: if you will let the old people on the other side of the water alone and marry my daughter, you shall live here whilst I live, and it shall be yours when I'm dead. I would not have made such an offer to any Britisher that ever stepped in shoe-leather; but boy and man have I lived for the last thirty-five years, and I am clear to confess I never saw the like of you before. Give us your hand upon it, and Maria's yours."

"I cannot," said Hammerton, "do justice to my feelings,

Mr. Corncob, on this occasion; but when you have heard me out, I think you will not blame me for the step I am taking. I love your daughter, and I think she does not dislike me; but I have in England a father past seventy, struck deaf from grief: I am the only son he has now alive, and he is penniless. I have hitherto sent him all the money I made, and with this and the straggling charity of some old friends, he has managed to live and to educate my only sister. What would you think, Mr. Corncob, of me, if I could under any circumstances, however flattering, desert him, become an alien to my country, and leave my sister a prey to all the allurements of the world? I am a sailor, sir—a plain-spoken, upright sailor, and I cannot leave my duty although love might steer my inclination; but if you think that I have purposely striven to gain your daughter's affection and have been successful, trust to the honour of Frederic Hammerton that he will return when he has done his duty to his father and seen his sister in security."

"Give us your hand, for I calculate you are a Christian, although you don't like peach-brandy. There's not a man in the States who hates your country more than I do; but I expect Jonathan Corncob has got his heart in the right place. Go, and God bless you, young man! If ever the winds should blow you clean against our coast, ask for me; and as I know you are not troubled with many dollars to chink against each other as you shake in the cart between this and Philadelphia, here are a few; take them, and if your inclination and your love lead you back to Happy Hill and Maria's not married, I guess we will have a jollification and old Corncob will have a son to take care of his old age. Maria won't bear this parting without a tear; but the time will come, when you find London is not paved with Spanish dollars, that you may feel contented to live and die amongst the freemen of America."

Hammerton took a lover's leave of Maria. She was not more than fifteen, but she was a woman grown; she loved him, for women mostly love the unfortunate,—the kindness, the natural inherent kindness of their dispositions prompts them to support the afflicted. The pity which is bestowed with a tearful eye upon the misfortunes of their fellow-creatures soon melts into love; and fortunate are they if, when that comes to pass, they find they have bestowed their affections upon such a heart as throbbed in the bosom of Frederic Hammerton.

"Farewell, farewell, my dear Maria!" said Hammerton as the lovely girl wept upon his shoulder. "You will love me the more when you consider that the affection I owe my parent and my sister has separated me from you for a time; and I shall ever hold you dearer to my heart when I remember that you have urged me to the fulfilment of my duty. The good son will make the better husband, and he who has supported his father will never desert his wife: fear me not. I may return; but who shall say that the Atlantic can be passed in safety and security?—but if I live, I will return."

"Never, never, Frederic!" replied Maria: "I feel this as our last parting—I know we shall never meet again! I do not think you will forget me, because I know you are incapable of an ungenerous act; but the busy, active life you have yet to lead will gently remove your love, and although we may be remembered with gratitude, we shall be forgotten in love. Good-b'ye! and if this will remind you of me, take it."

Hammerton's heart was full as he accepted the small portrait of Maria; and as he took his last kiss, she felt the tear upon her cheek which had flowed from the eyes of her lover.

With a heavy heart, yet with one which became lighter as he got farther from his late residence, Hammerton arrived at Philadelphia. He left the city of quakers the day following and got to New York; here he shipped himself on board of a small craft bound to Halifax, where he arrived one month exactly after he had left his Maria. Although he did occasionally think of her, yet the continued change of scene, the hurry and the bustle of the traveller's life, the hope of a return to his father, tended greatly to relieve his boyish affection: so true it is, that idleness, although the parent of mischief, is very nearly connected with love. There is no fear of the studious or industrious man becoming lovesick, unless he sink under the first glance and become idle: once idle, he may run into any evil and court every temptation.

Arrived at Halifax, he soon learned the sad tale of the loss of the Tribune. With excessive gratification he heard of the character, the bravery, the generosity of Murray. This gave him real pleasure, and he looked forward with some degree of hope that the early misdoings of the boy might be forgotten in the gallant actions of the man. Hammerton thought like a sailor; but little did he know how careful Malevolence hoards up the errors—how meager Jealousy and jaundiced Envy can treasure up the faults of youth to

hurl them in the face of aspiring greatness,—how the slightest blot in the escutcheon remains unimpaired, although the brilliancy of the colours on which it was fastened may fade by time or be lost in distance.

At the post-office Hammerton found three letters awaiting his arrival; they were all from his father. The first in order of date was that which had passed through Murray's hands; the second was on its road before the father received Frederic's letter from Virginia; and the third was written at the same time he answered the last, and was directed to Halifax; Sir Hector having persuaded old Mr. Hammerton, that as his son was no fool, he would in all probability endeavour to reach Halifax to rejoin his ship; and the old gentleman did not forget in this letter to mention how sincerely happy he was that Hammerton would find at the same time the fifty pounds which Sir Hector had sent by the same conveyance—nay, enclosed in the same envelope as his own. It was therefore evident that if Hammerton received the one, he must have received the other; and as Mr. Hammerton knew Sir Hector to have taken particular care to forward the letters to the Admiralty, so he knew that those letters were sure of being forwarded to their destination, barring capture or shipwreck.

It is needless to give the contents of the affectionate letters of Frederic's father: they were in that style which a religious and excellent man adopts to the boy of his heart—the prop of his house—and they were not hastily dismissed, but read and re-read often. The last letter puzzled him amazingly: after thanking Heaven that it had been predestined that his son should be saved, and after having poured out his very soul in thanksgiving for so great and merciful a favour, it proceeded to state the growing intimacy which daily increased between himself and Sir Hector, and then came this paragraph:—

“The timely assistance of the fifty pounds which Sir Hector Murray enclosed in his letter to you under the same cover as my own, written on Amelia's birthday, will in your case be particularly serviceable. I say nothing to you of economy; for from your economy, my dear boy, I have hitherto been much assisted. For the future, however, it is, I hope, unnecessary for you to forward me any money,—the kindness of Sir Hector has placed me beyond want. Therefore, do not stint yourself in order to send me any part of the fifty pounds; but, with the care of a man whose wants are numerous and whose means are small, so dispose of it that

in the disposition there may be no present pang or future repentance."

Hammerton read the letter over and over again: he returned to the post-office to inquire if there was no other letter for him, but again considering his father's, and more particularly the part which referred to his letter having been sent by Sir Hector, he began to entertain some awkward suspicions. The letter said to have been enclosed by Sir Hector, and which was written on Amelia's birthday, was in his hand; but there was no direction further than his name, and it was evident from the clean state of the paper that it never had shaken hands with the villainous filth which is so often found in a ship's letter-bag.

It happened that Murray had often spoken to the commissioner concerning the sad loss of Hammerton, it being generally believed that he had been swamped during the squall and all hands lost; and as his father made mention of the hospitable reception Murray had met with from him, Hammerton resolved to introduce himself to the old captain, and claim his advice and protection. He might have gone on board a frigate lying in the harbour, and this indeed was the proper step he should have taken; but from the tenor of his father's letter he thought there was no harm in trying the commissioner; for Corncob's dollars had vanished pretty considerably during his overland expedition, and he was now left with just sufficient to chink, and no more.

The commissioner on hearing his name, although he had entirely forgotten it, gave him a cordial reception, and soon remembering the circumstances, inquired in what manner he could serve him. Hammerton placed the correspondence in his hands, and begged his advice how to proceed. The commissioner said that to all appearances the letter had come in the envelope of another; and he directed very particular inquiries to be made at the post office. The result was far from satisfactory; for the only clue which could be obtained was very much to the detriment of Murray's character,—it being satisfactorily proved that he had taken a letter directed to Mr. Hammerton, and had afterwards returned one, which, as far as the postmaster could remember, was not the same.

With the generosity of character which had distinguished Hammerton in England, on board his ship, and in America, he refused to entertain the slightest suspicion against his gallant young friend, and induced the commissioner to see the case with his eyes;—namely, that as the letter had been

sent to one of the Lords of the Admiralty, to be forwarded to Halifax in the bag made up for the Tribune, it required no direction beyond the name; and that the bag contained a better correspondence and a cleaner-handed set of letter-writers than are usually to be found about the Point, Sally-Port, or Plymouth Dock.

Hammerton was removed on board the *Diana*; and having refused all pecuniary assistance from the commissioner, he became a lower-deck passenger, in some of Corncob's clothing, and by no means disposed to meet the laughter of his more fortunate shipmates. This laughter, however, soon gave way to the generous feelings of young sailors, who are always disposed to assist their neighbours; and Hammerton, when he was rigged according to his rank, requested he might be allowed to do duty. His amiable manners—his frank, generous behaviour, soon procured him friends, and he found himself, when half-way across the Atlantic, with a very respectable show of clothes, and a chest of linen which would not have disgraced the son of Sir Hector Murray. In due time the *Diana* reached Plymouth; and Hammerton, having obtained his discharge, went on shore, intending to start that evening for Taunton, and thence to walk the few miles which would there separate him from his father's cottage.

Hammerton had left his father when the tide of prosperity was at its height; and although frequent letters had taught him to expect a great change in the appearance of his parent's habitation, yet he was very little prepared to find the once opulent merchant in the small cottage in which he resided. From the moment when Hammerton first heard of his father's failure, he instantly reduced all superfluous expenditure: he had known the full blessings of money, but instantly became prepared to resist all temptations. Out of the prize-money which fell to his lot, he carefully remitted the greater part home; and as misfortunes came faster upon his father, when his wife died and his elder son was murdered, then did Frederic labour to console him and to deprive himself of every luxury which the smallest expenditure may sometimes insure in a midshipman's berth. With a heart not much elated by the success of his early life, and with the full conviction that his future advancement would depend upon his own exertions—with the expectation of seeing his father weighed down by misfortune to the very verge of the grave, Frederic made the best of his way to Taunton.

The once opulent merchant was known more from his

sudden change than from his large dealings in that town.—The road which led to the cottage was pointed out, for the sailing directions were clear and distinct, although the language in which they were conveyed might have puzzled a less inquisitive head. Frederic was directed to follow the high Exeter road until he arrived at a large entrance-gate on the left hand: immediately opposite was a cottage—it was there the once great merchant resided.

As Hammerton approached the place, his generous heart beat quicker. He stopped to look at the superb entrance to Sir Hector Murray's house, and then turned his eye to the small wicket gate which led to the cottage. Eight years had elapsed since he had seen his father: he had grown a man, his features were altered, his cheeks were sunburnt—the heat of the American summer had altered his appearance; from a stripling he had become a well-set specimen of human nature, standing nearly five feet ten inches high. He knew he could pass and repass without being known; he feared to enter suddenly; and in order to collect his thoughts, he sat down nearly opposite the cottage, in the hope of seeing his father or catching one glance of Amelia. But this was not his only idea: it occurred to the generous fellow that he had arrived much about his father's dinner-time, and he was apprehensive that if he entered at once, he might deprive his parent of some of the food he could ill afford to lose. He too was hungry; but the very reflection of the mutability of all human affairs even cheated the hungry bowels of a midshipman: the man who had commanded thousands and thousands of pounds, now left to linger through the cold termination of life without a farthing but what some liberal friend might send him or what his son could earn for him!

It was about seven in the evening; the dark clouds of winter began to lower into night; the wind came with that surly sigh which proclaims to landmen the approach of a storm; the leaves fell from the trees, their days of existence being passed, and as they flew by him, Hammerton cheated the time by watching how far they were carried, and moralised within himself upon the old subject of the passing away of generations of generations, and comparing the life of man to the leaf which fell by him.

Time flies when the mind is active; but rapidly does it hurry on when anxious expectation keeps the eye vigilant. The day soon closed, and darkness followed. It was strange that Hammerton was fearful to enter the house where he

would have been most welcome: he even thought of returning to Taunton, dreading lest it should alarm his old father to demand an entrance at such an hour. No light had been seen at any window—no careful hand came to secure the frail barrier against intruders, and the cottage appeared untenanted.

"It is useless waiting," thought Hammerton; "and now I will inquire—I will ask at the great man's lodge: his porter looks better housed than the once richest merchant in England." Hammerton cared not to disturb one who held so good a situation, and who in reality did nothing but open a gate twice or three times during the day.

His appeal to the large bell was answered by a smart-looking girl, who, seeing a stranger, very wisely kept the gate fast as she held the light over her head so as to allow it to fall upon Hammerton's face without much showing her own.

"Is this Sir Hector Murray's?" said Hammerton.

"Yes, sir," was replied.

"Pray, may I ask if a gentleman of the name of Hammerton resides any where hereabouts?"

"In that cottage, sir," replied the woman. "But he is not at home—he is at present with Sir Hector Murray."

"He has a daughter, I believe: is she with him?"

"Yes, sir; Miss Amelia you mean. Shall I tell Mr. Hammerton you wish to see him?"

"No; I will wait for his return: it cannot be long."

"No, sir; this rain will soon make the old gentleman come home." Here Hammerton wished her a good-night, and taking a kind of quarter-deck walk, might be said to have closely blockaded the port.

It was not long before Hammerton saw a light moving down the avenue, and with the impatience of a son naturally anxious to greet an aged and an unfortunate parent he paced the limits of his little walk watching his father's exit from Sir Hector's gate. He saw how age had crept upon him—how the blows of an ungrateful world had nearly felled him to the earth: the step was unsteady, and he leaned upon the slender support of his beautiful daughter. Carefully did he conceal himself, and attentively did he listen to the woman's account of the tall dark stranger who had made the inquiries, but refused to give his name, or see the person after whom he had inquired.

"Odd—very odd," replied old Hammerton, "that a man should come to me at the dusk of evening, learn where I was, refuse to send me his name, and with as much concealment as he advanced, retired!—Which way did he go?"

"I really cannot say, sir," replied the woman; "but my little girl about a quarter of an hour ago heard footsteps opposite your gate."

"Let us go quickly, Mimie, my love; it might be some one inclined to deal another blow upon the helpless,—one, knowing my infirmity, come to take by force that which I could not retain by opposition. Quick! quick!—open the gate!—There,—go back, Susan! keep out of the rain and the wind! you must not take cold, you know."

The gate was closed, and Susan retired. Amelia held the light close down to avoid any inequalities in the road, but did not speak, for that would have been useless. By her manner she conveyed what she would have said: she led her father with care and caution; but being startled by a noise near her, she turned hastily round,—in her agitation, for she was already highly predisposed to fear, the lantern dropped from her hand, and poor old Hammerton stumbling over a stone, fell down upon the road.

Susan, who considered it impossible, or at any rate highly improbable, that any accident could occur in the crossing of the road, which, considering the situation of the cottage, could not be more than thirty yards, had shut up her door for the night, and the howl of the wind and the pattering of the rain prevented her hearing the scream which escaped Amelia when her father fell. They were in total darkness, for they had not recovered from the glare of light inside the lodge, and therefore when their only guide, the lantern, was extinguished, they were unable to see one foot before them. Hammerton, on the contrary, had become accustomed to the darkness, and being close in the rear of his father, saw him tumble. At the very moment when prudence was the most requisite, he forgot himself; or perhaps it might be that his feelings were too highly excited when he saw his father fall, to allow him to refrain from proffering assistance. He made but one stride, and Amelia saw her father in the grasp of a stranger: she flew to defend him, and seizing her brother violently by the neck, found words enough to express her opinion of the act.

"Let go my father, you robber!—What! would you touch a man who cannot hear! Let go, I say!" And she made very excellent use of her nails, applying them to the cheek of her brother.

In the mean time, old Hammerton had been lifted on his legs before the son spoke.

"Amelia! Amelia!" he began, "is this the reward I deserve for assisting my father?"

"Who are you?" said the girl.

"Your brother Frederic," replied Hammerton; and no sooner had the words passed his lips, than the arms of his sister were entwined round his neck. Old Hammerton, who could not comprehend what was going on, and only aware that he had been assisted by the stranger, thanked him courteously, and asked him to take shelter in his cottage. Amelia left her father under Frederic's care, whilst she opened the gate, rang at the door, procured a light; and the three were ushered into the small room—which served for study, parlour, sitting, and receiving room. No sooner had Amelia placed the light on the table, than without informing her father who the stranger was,—and all trace of whose boyish countenance had left him,—she hung round his neck and kissed him a hundred times.

Now, Mr. Hammerton in his early youth had known the ways of this sinful world; and although a man of very grateful heart, he was unable to comprehend directly what new frolic this was of the best of daughters, and what sudden fancy she could have taken for the dark-skinned stranger, that she should cling to him closer and closer, gazing with affectionate look upon the handsome man, and kissing him again and again.

"There," said he to Amelia, "that's quite enough, my dear; the gentleman was extremely kind in assisting me, but you need not kiss him for ever."

Amelia's glowing cheeks gave way to a smile, her fingers ran over the letters, and old Hammerton stood like a statue, his eyes fixed upon Frederic, tracing with scrupulous exactness the features, doubting the reality, and yet willing to believe that he beheld his son. Still was he so altered, that even his father could scarcely recognise him; but painful as the suspense was between doubt and conviction, it ended in a loud exclamation of "God bless you, boy!" and Frederic was in his father's arms.

The manner in which the sudden intelligence had been communicated and the silence during the scrutiny were superseded by young Hammerton's response to his father's blessing when he threw himself into his arms and said, "My father! my father!"

"I *heard* it," replied old Hammerton. "Gracious Heavens! do I live to be so rewarded! I *heard* my son's voice, and what pain and misery deprived me of has been restored by unexpected pleasure. Speak, Amelia—let me hear your

darling voice again!—speak, that I may kneel and thank God for this wonderful recovery.”

“Oh! can it be true, Frederic!” said Amelia.

“I heard you, sweetest girl, and never can I forget that voice again! But kneel with me;—all ties of kindred must give way to duty—all feelings of affection, all filial attachment, all parental regard must be delayed until we have offered up our thanksgiving for this second life; for he is half dead, whose remembrance is dulled by deafness, who cannot hear the voices of his children.”

Giving an example in his manner, Hammerton lifted up his prayers to Heaven, and sincerely did his children join in their thanksgivings; and although the most pious must have been gratified at this solemn sight, orthodoxy might have startled at the conclusion: “And if, O Lord, it is predestined that I may again be deprived of this thy greatest blessing, grant that it may be also predestined that with that loss I lose my existence.”

Neither Frederic nor Amelia said “Amen” to it: the treasure so quickly found might be as quickly snatched away, and old Hammerton was a parent respected and loved.

The wild exuberance of the old man's joy seemed likely to occasion a delirium; his nerves were strangely agitated. Fearful that this might be a spark lighted up before its total extinction, he listened to all that was said with eager attention; and if he fancied some word fell not with the force of the others on his ear, his “*What?*” was horrible. To obviate any disaster from over-excitement, old Hammerton was sent to bed; Amelia retired to her room; and Frederic, regarding all the perils he had encountered as blessings now realised, threw himself upon the sofa, and, after again offering up prayers for his safe return and the results it had occasioned, he fell into a repose such as the poor can experience in fuller force than the affluent.

CHAPTER XX.

Home scenes.—A miraculous interposition before death.

Nor long after daylight Sir Hector was awake and a note placed in his hand. Mr. Hammerton, unable to sleep, had penned a hasty scrawl, apprising Sir Hector of all that had passed, and begging him to call as early as possible. Sir Hector was too true a friend not to participate in his friend's

feelings; and when he made his appearance, although it was still early morning, he found Frederic ready to welcome his father's and his own benefactor, and the youth was not slow in making due acknowledgment.

"Strange alterations!" thought Frederic. "The man who was courted to be present at every sight, and every party—who had thousands at his door imploring his support and assistance, solicitous for his interest—one whom the world looked upon as a giant of wealth,—now to be mewed up in this cottage, hardly large enough to swing a cat in, and to be beholden for that to the man whom he scarcely knew, and who might have been considered a rival rather than a friend!"

Frederic could not complain of the cordial shake of the hand he met with from Sir Hector; but the latter asked no questions, being more than incredulous as to the sudden restoration of his friend's hearing. He found him alone—this was unusual, for heretofore his little interpreter was by his side; and if the pleasure of one was great when he held a conversation without the assistance of a third party, it was no less astonishing to the other, who could scarcely credit his own senses. As to any explanation of how it had occurred, none could be given: unaccountably as the sense had been lost, so was it restored. Old Hammerton, although suffering from a nervous excitement, was a new man; and, as he assured Sir Hector, perfectly satisfied that it was predestined it should be so, nothing could rivet him more firmly in the belief than that he had recovered in the manner he had.

Sir Hector now turned his attention to Frederic, and heard from his own lips of Walter's behaviour and the good character he had left behind him at Halifax. Frederic was much too liberal to make any allusion to the fifty pounds, although he found himself awkwardly situated on that point; to return thanks for the money which after all might never have been sent, would be a folly; and yet not to mention it, savoured of ingratitude. This was a point which required some dexterity, and every time Frederic attempted to clear away the ground in order to lead to it, he was cut short by a fresh question from the baronet, who seemed resolved that no explanation should take place.

"Where is your sister, Frederic?" said Sir Hector. "This must be a happy day for her; I never remember to have entered this house before without seeing her."

"She is sitting upon that seat, sir," replied Frederic, "and is writing."

"Well, I must go to my little favourite, since she won't come to me;" and as lightly as a man of his age could hobble, Sir Hector approached the person whom he loved best in the world after his own son. So busy was Amelia at her task, that she did not hear him approach; and he, with the freedom of a friend, as she concluded the last stanza, seemingly enamoured of her own performance, took up the paper and read as follows:—

"Some years of life have pass'd and flown
 Since last I heard a human sound:
 My ear was dull, my spirits gone—
 A dead cold silence all around.
 I've known that others spoke and laughed—
 I've seen wit kindle in the eye;
 But when the generous wine was quaff'd,
 I lost that cheerful wit's reply.

When beauty touch'd the silv'ry lyre,
 I tried to catch the stirring note:
 How vain, alas! was that desire!
 On ears like mine no raptures float.
 I've watch'd the maid whose song was o'er
 Receive the homage of the rest;
 And sylph-like would she tread the floor,
 With flushing face and beating breast.

Within that sacred, bless'd abode
 Where I was early taught to pray,
 I could not *hear* the word of God—
 In silence pass'd the pray'rs away.
 I saw the holy man pour forth
 An inspiration of the word,
 Whilst tears proclaim'd that preacher's worth,
 Alas for me! *I never heard!*

I had a child, a pretty child,
 A darling only six years old:
 The boy had eyes and features mild,
 And yet he looked both proud and bold:
 And when he talk'd, I strain'd my ear,
 Around me others laugh'd and smiled:
I could not hear—I could not hear!
 My cares could never be beguiled.

I've watch'd him play about the room,
 I've seen his sister's laugh with joy;
 His smile dispersed a mother's gloom—
 It solaced mine, my darling boy!

I've danced him on a father's knee,
 I've tried to guess what he might say—
 Oh, pang unknown to all but me!—
 I could not *hear* my infant pray.

'Twas yesterday the morning air
 Came with the balmy breath of spring :
 I wander'd to dispel my care—
 Great God ! I heard a linnet sing !
 I knew it, for though years had pass'd,
 No other sound had that effaced ;
 Its cheerful note had been the last
 Upon my dull'd remembrance placed.

'Twas Sunday morn : I heard the bell—
 I heard the organ's solemn sound ;
 I heard my children's voices swell,
 Hymning thanksgivings all around.
 I knelt to Him who thus restored
 What he in wrath had snatch'd away ;
 Oh ! how I fervently adored,
 And own'd the blessings of the day !
 Let me not lift my pray'r in vain—
 Still let me hear my child's dear voice !
 No more, O Lord, will I complain—
 My wo is past and I rejoice :
 I bow my head, I rend my heart,
 I lift my voice in hourly pray'r ;—
 Lord ! let thy servant now depart,
 Lest I relapse—lest I despair !”

“You are a darling, kind-hearted, affectionate girl, Amelia !” said Sir Hector as he read the three last verses again : “it is under the influence of such a sun as yourself that virtue flourishes. Bad indeed must be the heart which cannot appreciate the merits of this juvenile production !—Don’t show it to your father : the last verse might engender thoughts which the blessing he has received ought to banish for ever.”

“It was his own expression last night,” replied Amelia modestly, “when he knelt down and thanked God for his great goodness. I altered the first part and about the linnet, for fear it should recall the horrible sight which deprived him of hearing.”

“It is a miraculous interposition, and I only know of one parallel to it recorded in history.—But, come, this must be a day of rejoicing, and we will not allow it to pass without acknowledging our gratitude to Him who has so signally

manifested his power. Come, come to breakfast at my house. Now, Hammerton," he continued as he took the father by the arm, "you will hear Frederic's story from his own mouth."

The narrative of the sailor's adventures was told with much earnestness: his escape from the perils with which he was surrounded in the boat—his own share, inasmuch as the directions given were his own, were related with becoming modesty; and when he drew towards the conclusion and confessed his love for Maria Corncob, the faces of all began to alter from gloom to cheerfulness. The generosity of the American was properly commended; and Amelia added with a smile, that if the lovely Maria was as good in grain as the thing after which she appeared to be named, the Indian corn would be liked in any cob grown in Virginia or Maryland.

"The sooner, Hammerton," said Sir Hector, "that we ship off this sailor the better: a midshipman in love would be a fine subject for Amelia's poetical powers! I suppose you have no objection to his going to sea again?"

"On the contrary, Sir Hector," replied Hammerton, "as it is evident he is not predestined to be drowned."

"Not in that particular place and time," replied Sir Hector with a smile. "But who knows that, the next time he goes to Portsmouth from Gosport, he may not be run down by a dockyard lighter, the very one predestined before the foundation of the earth to founder him?"

"Pooh! pooh!—nonsense!" replied Mr. Hammerton; "I never carried it quite so far as that! But this I think—"

"Stop! stop!" said Sir Hector good-humouredly; "we must leave argument to-day, in order to provide for him to-morrow. That shall be my charge; and in the mean time he must fit himself out, as Corncob's suit and the borrowed garments of his late messmates would ill become him now."

The day passed merrily. Amelia was unceasing in her questions as to Miss Corncob—she was particular in learning her dress, the manner of her pronunciation; and as time and distance had a little opened the eyes of Frederic, he gave a spirited caricature of the life, manners and employments of a Virginia farmer, much to her amusement. They were interrupted only once by Sir Hector, who desired Frederic to write down Corncob's direction; and from an insight into his banker's book afterwards, the American's liberality and generosity were found not to have gone entirely unrewarded.

A very few days passed before Hammerton was properly

refitted,—new rigging over his mast-head, his chest stocked, and his pockets lined. He was to go to Malta in a packet, and there to remain until the arrival of the *Leonidas*, the captain of which ship was a distant relation of Sir Hector's, and who, he had no doubt, would receive him.

A great difficulty had arisen in procuring a certificate as to Hammerton's servitude. The log of the *Tribune* had been lost with the ship; and as he had left her previously to the wreck, he was unnamed among those who were tried for her loss at Halifax. This placed an insuperable barrier against his passing for a lieutenant; for the whole of his time had been served in that unlucky vessel, and no officer could be ferreted out in England who could attest such servitude up to the period of her last sailing. It was true, in her pay and muster books there stood the name of Frederic Hammerton; but a certificate of good conduct was requisite. All these difficulties Sir Hector pledged himself to overcome, and Hammerton sailed for his destination.

It was a singular fact, that Hammerton's father appeared, as the day approached for his son's departure, to relapse gradually, and again to show trifling symptoms of becoming deaf: increased age might have done something, which his nervous agitation, whenever he allowed himself to think upon the subject, made still worse.

Why prolong this description? the last part of the old man's prayer had been heard. When his hearing entirely failed him he died; and she who had been to him as ears in his deafness—as the medium of understanding between him and the world, continued as a nurse, a daughter, a most unwearied attendant. She scarcely closed her eyes; the restless pillow of sickness was smoothed by her delicate hands; and when the old man would bless her, and lift a prayer to Heaven that she might be protected from the world's ways, and die the angel she had lived, her gentle voice would sweetly rise to Heaven in supplication for him who was her father and her friend—who had been unfortunate in life, and who was resigned in death.

"Think not of me, father," she would say; "the protecting hand of Providence will guide and direct me;—think only of yourself: your race is run, and your account must be rendered. We who have known you have little fear for the awful trial; for he who never injured his neighbour—who in his affluence assisted the distressed—whose charity was unostentatious, whose integrity was undoubted—who was kind as a parent, affectionate as a husband, beloved as a friend, and sincere as a Christian, may justly hope for that inheritance which his life has merited."

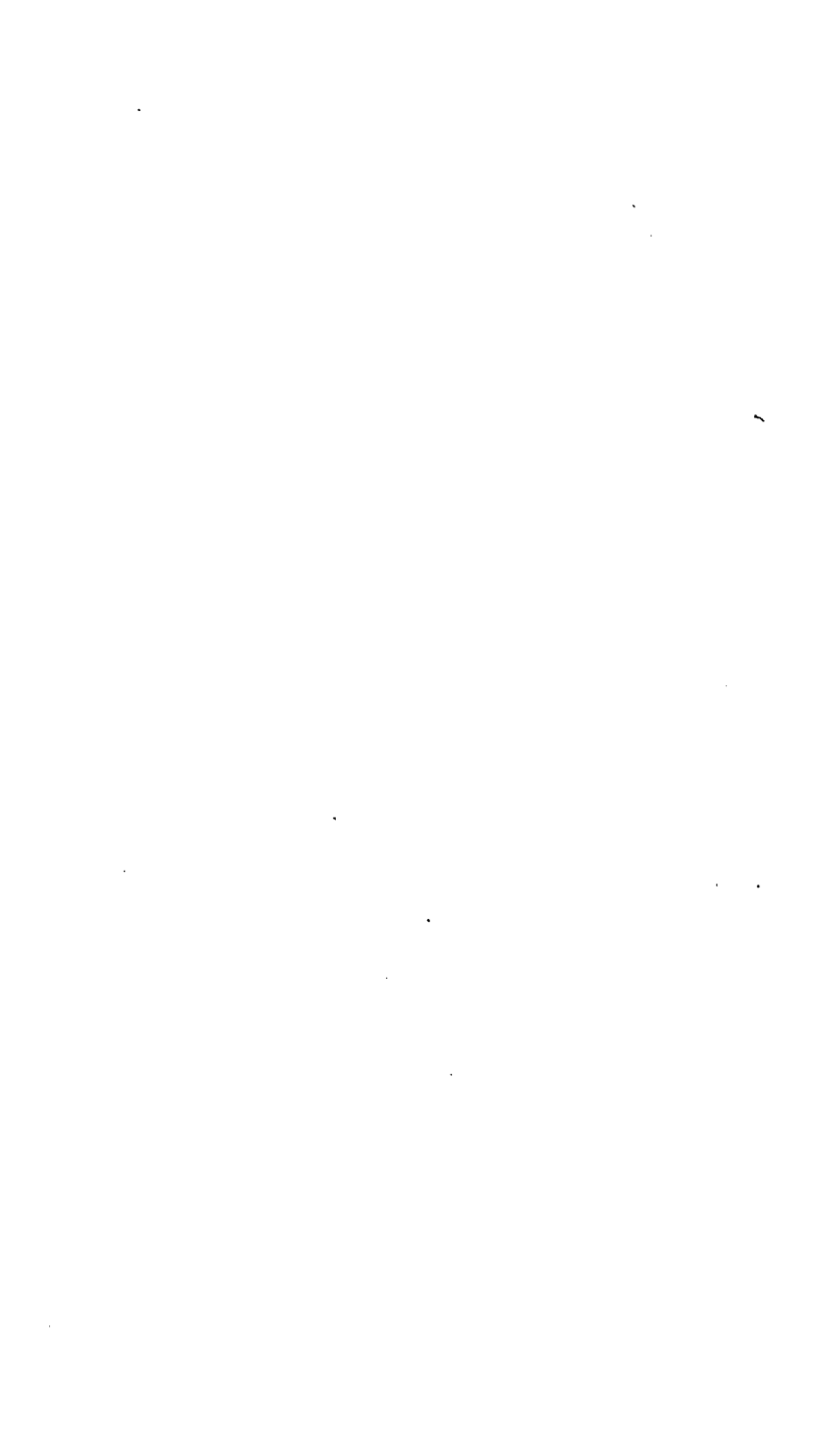
"I care not for myself, dear girl," he would say; "my days of misfortune and trial are over. I am not such a hypocrite as to believe that a life of error can be atoned for at the last minute: if I am predestined to be saved, so will it be done; if not, I must abide the chance. I do not know that at this awful hour I have any great sin with which I can reproach myself, and I go forward on my career without apprehension, supported by an easy conscience.—Who is that?"

"It is I, my old friend, come to see you again," said Sir Hector.

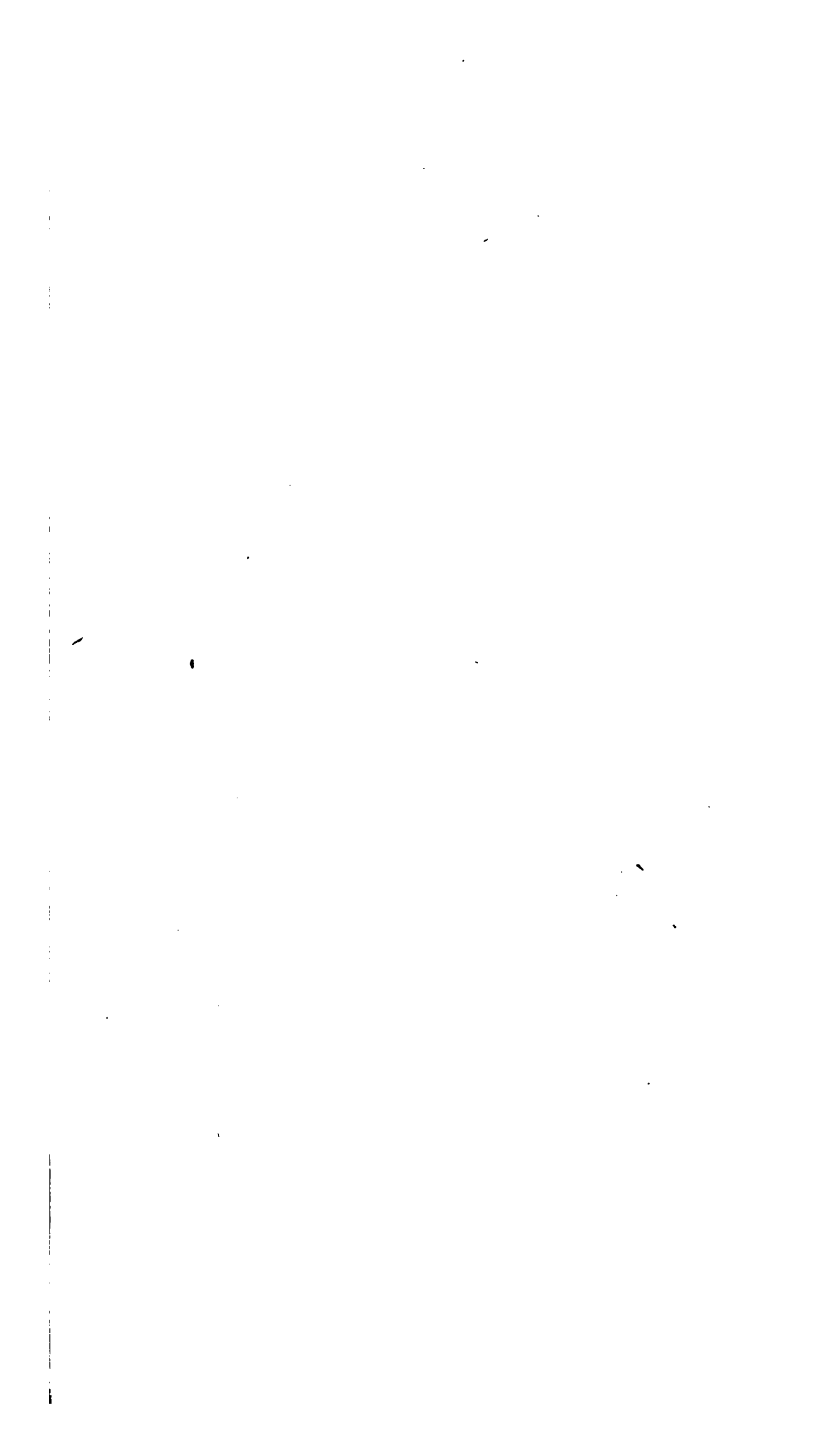
"For the last time a living body!—But my boy—and that little angel, Murray, see her lift her little hands to Heaven for me, when, Heaven knows, *she* has more need of our prayers!—for in this dark and slippery path of life, who is to guide the innocent, or shelter the afflicted? I am easy, Murray,—easy in all but her. I leave her in your cottage a pensioner upon your bounty: you will not cast her out when she is fatherless."

Sir Hector seized his hand. "I would sooner," he said, "have died myself than have heard those words! As true as you are present, O God! at this afflicting scene, so truly will I protect them both in this life, and implore your protection for them hereafter!" He turned to look upon his friend,—but he had for ever passed away,—and with such a smile of contentment upon his countenance, that the calmness of resignation was nearly lost in the strong mark of apparent satisfaction.

"The Lord take him to himself!" said Sir Hector. As the sobs of Amelia stopped his further address, "Come, my child," he said, "this is no scene for you. Your abode is now with me: as you have well done your duty to him, so do I hope that I may be able to do towards you. Old as I am, I feel younger now; for I have a charge, and a great but a pleasant one. We must learn to bear these lessons, my child; the scene is fast closing around me, the curtain drops over my dearest friend, and day after day but makes us more familiar with that which we must all meet. It is after all but a shadow, for death has no substance: it is an imaginary evil, more feared in the distance than when nearest; and since all must encounter it, it is well to be acquainted with it. God bless you, child! your little heart will sadly mourn for this; but time will remove the first pang, and impression, and kindness and attention may alleviate the affliction and console you for the bereavement."







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